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MEMORIALS

OF _____

J. A. TORRANCE.



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J. A. TORRANCE.

H. J. Torrance

MEMORIALS

OF

JOHN A. TORRANCE

...

AGENT FOR THIRTY YEARS

OF THE

PATIENTS' AND PRISONERS' AID SOCIETY

(WITH PORTRAIT).

EDITED, WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

BY

THE REV. JAS. CHISHOLM.

...

Dunedin :

PUBLISHED FOR THE PATIENTS' AND PRISONERS' AID SOCIETY

BY

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THOMSON, H. V. WIDDOWSON, W. HISLOP (Members of
Committee), AND MR. F. G. CUMMING (Agent), OF THE
PATIENTS' AND PRISONERS' AID SOCIETY, WITHOUT
WHOSE HEARTY SYMPATHY AND CO-OPERATION THE
FOLLOWING SKETCHES COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PUB-
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PREFACE.



On the first page of a somewhat bulky note book Mr. Torrance writes : " From time to time I have been chided by friends for not keeping an unbroken diary since I began my work in connection with the Institutions in September, 1868. They rightly believe that much useful information and many interesting incidents of various kinds, fitted to make up a readable book, must have come under my notice." Some wise friend had again been pricking his conscience. Hence the big note book and the brave intention of filling it. Its contents, however, taper off from the few carefully written pages at the beginning, to a fringe of hasty scribblings and jottings. He belonged to the class of people who are so busy doing things that they have no leisure to record them. He did, however, at a later period snatch brief intervals from his crowded life to write the following sketches. A few of them appeared some years ago in the " Outlook," but the most of them appear now for the first time.

I am deeply thankful to have the privilege of doing something, however small, to bring this little book within the reach of what I am sure will be a large number of appreciative readers, and so help to perpetuate the memory of a good man and a noble work.—J.C.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

John Ainslie Torrance once seen could hardly be forgotten. His keen face marked by lines of strenuous thought, his bent shoulders, his head stretched forward when he walked as if his eager spirit would fain have outrun his frail body, left an abiding impression of very distinct individuality on all who saw him. He had been for about forty years in closest contact with the most needy persons in the community, and literally wore himself out in their service. For about nine months after his retirement his life was a prolonged agony, unbroken by a single interval of healthful repose. Death came to him as a great relief, and ushered him into the rest he eagerly longed for. His name will be a household word throughout Otago for many a day—the name of that firm, kindly man at whose brotherly touch hard hearts grew tender and despairing souls were quickened to hopefulness and courage.

He was born in Edinburgh on October 25, 1832. Though the fifth child of his parents, only two birthdays preceded his, twins having come on two occasions. The father died early and left eight children, whose ages ranged from ten years to three weeks. It seemed a dreary outlook for the widowed mother. But she set herself with a noble courage to provide for the needs of her

young family. She was strongly urged to seek a home for some of them in one or other of the institutions that have been founded in the Scottish capital for the succour of fatherless children. But she refused to part with one of them. We read of Barnardo's mother that "she was a woman of great strength of character and deep religious convictions, and that explains his biography." It was the same with Torrance and his mother. With a dutiful regard to his physical and moral well-being, he was reared on oatmeal, the Shorter Catechism, and the east wind. The last element blows with a snell insistence from the German Ocean, and, along with the other two less exacting elements, has put stamina into many a Scottish boy. He saw the ships at Leith come sailing in from over the horizon, and his boyish imagination yearned to see what lay beyond. Unknown to his mother, whose anxiety and toil he foolishly thought to lighten by his absence, he hired himself as a cabin-boy. It was a rude awakening. The captain was exacting and cruel. Very clearly the way to the House that Jack built did not lie in that direction. And so when the vessel returned, after visiting some of the ports of Northern Europe, he stole away from his dungeon and its haunting ogre and nestled again at home, under the brooding love of his dear mother. He began hard work on shore when he was about ten years of age, and kept at it all through the sixty-six years that have passed since then.

Like Livingstone, who started work at the same age, he laid his first earnings in his mother's lap; and so truly was the child the father of the man that after he

came to Otago he regularly sent home sufficient money to keep his mother in comfort till the day of her death. The lines along which his future life and work developed were very much determined by the two facts that mean so much. He was a fatherless boy, and his mother was poor and pious—ready to toil to the last flicker of her energy, and deny herself the last scrap of necessary comfort, in order that her family might grow up “respected like the lave.” A softening haze of memory made less repellent many a stern experience in after years, just because Mr Torrance saw his own early life and relationships mirrored in the fatherless boys and poor widows with whom he had to do. He attended a night school, and managed by his diligence during the closing hours of his toilsome day to keep pace in his education with ordinary schoolboys. After a time he was apprenticed to the printing trade in the office of the North British Advertiser. His home training, backed by his eager nature, spurred him on to do his best in whatever sphere of life he occupied. And so it came about that while attaining proficiency in his trade, he was commending himself to those who watched his career as a young man of sterling character. His appointment as chaplain to the passengers of the ship Ben Lomond, in which he sailed to Dunedin, showed the reputation he had already won. He arrived here after the discovery of the goldfields, and though the community was somewhat feverish over the tempting riches of the Molyneux and its many tributaries, he settled down quietly to the kind of work in which, through long practice, he had become

an expert. He became manager of the printing department in connection with the *Evening Star*. His ordinary work did not engross his energies, and when out of harness he sought to lead others to the vantage ground of Christian truth and grace which he had reached. His heart seemed instinctively to turn towards practical effort for the good of his neighbours. When out of leash he had as keen a scent for those who were in special need of sympathy and help as a well-trained St. Bernard amid alpine snow. His rare fitness for work of a philanthropic type was recognised, and when it became necessary to appoint a chaplain to the three institutions under the control of the Provincial Government—the Gaol, the Hospital, and the Lunatic Asylum—he was chosen for the important office. With the passing away of the provincial regime the chaplaincy was abolished. “Thereupon a public meeting was held in Dunedin, at which it was resolved that a mission on a broader basis than that of the chaplaincy should be established.” This mission began its operations on July 1, 1877 under the name of the Patients and Prisoners’ Aid Society. The object of the society, as stated in the constitution, was “to employ an agent to encourage and instruct, by means of religious services and otherwise, the inmates of Dunedin Hospital, Gaol, and Lunatic Asylum, and to aid persons discharged from these institutions to make a fresh start in life.” Mr Torrance received the appointment. Henceforth the society and he were one. Even yet the one invariably suggests the other. His purity of motive, his untiring energy, and saving common sense greatly helped to make

it the beneficent factor it became in relieving poverty and preventing crime, and guiding back erring feet into ways of industry and rectitude. He was to be found now and then, as a kind of pastime, in almost every district in Otago, taking religious service on Sunday, gladdening the eyes of his many friends by his presence, and drawing sympathy to his work by a fitting recital of his experiences among his somewhat motley congregation in Dunedin. Some queer stories of attempted imposition deftly foiled would lighten up his narrative and bring a gleam of humour into an otherwise heartrending tale. His genuine honesty of purpose, his home-spun rhetoric, without the slightest fringe of affectation, won the approval of all, and gained support in quarters where more brilliant gifts would have failed. He was a Presbyterian by training and conviction, and held office as an elder in Knox Church, but he ignored all distinctions of Church and creed amongst the endless variety of people to whom he ministered. He was a good Samaritan to all who needed his help. He took a delight in shaming people out of their narrow dogmatisms and exclusive claims to the Kingdom of God. With this end in view he would tell the story of the two women whom he knew in the Asylum. Mrs G., a short, stumpy, self-asserting body, held very exclusive views. One day while sitting with other inmates she was affirming very dogmatically that they were all wrong and she alone right, and that unless they believed as she did (a height of attainment, however, which she clearly let them understand they were utterly incapable of ever reaching), not one

of them would get into heaven with her. This was too much for Mrs W., a tall, masculine-looking woman, who was leaning against the wall with arms akimbo, and legs crossed. Stepping forward and stretching out her long arm, and bending over the little woman, she said: "'Deed, my woman, gin ye are to ha'e heeven a' to yoursel', I doot ye'll find it an unco dull place!" And then, with a significant nod and frown, she strode majestically from the room. No one rejoiced more in the roominess of heaven than he; no one stood with deeper awe at the foot of the Cross; no one was more earnest in telling men that the way to the roomy heaven lay through the blood of the Cross. Of all the pictures in Bunyan's famous gallery "Old Honesty" is his nearest prototype.

There was in his line of things, as in that of many others, a Scylla and Charybdis. In trying to avoid a too pliant benevolence that could only foster pauperism he might easily have stiffened into pitiless indifference to real need, and instead of being a saviour of men he might have degenerated into a censor of morals; or, in seeking to keep clear of all Pharisaic harshness he might easily enough have slipped into the ooze of indiscriminate charity. No doubt he was imposed upon; but disappointing experience, while quickening his vigilance, did not exhaust his patience or dry up the springs of his love. Better be cheated a hundred times than that even one really in need should be sent empty away; and, in default of kindness in his fellow-man, begin to doubt the love of God. General Gordon's formula for governing men ever lay in the background of Mr Torrance's mind. "To

govern men," wrote the Christian hero, "there is but one way, and it is an eternal truth. Get into their skins. Try to realise their feelings. That is the true secret of government." Mr Torrance could never think or speak of "the masses" as of so many blocks of wood. He had a power of insight and imagination which enabled him to individualise each case and place himself in the position of everyone who needed his help. "The masses," he would have said with Carlyle, "consist all of units, every unit of whom has his own heart and sorrows, stands covered there with his own skin, and if you prick him he will bleed." How his work tried him will be evident from a sentence or two in his report of 1888:—"It goes without saying that I met with disappointing cases, and in the course of the year had to do with many perplexing ones—cases that I may without exaggeration say occasion moral torture, because of the difficulty of knowing how really to help to advantage." In what spirit he carried on his trying work is seen when he says: "I strive to be influenced by the example of Him Who said, 'The poor ye have always with you,' and Who had compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way."

How thankful he was for the business men who were ever ready to turn about in their office chairs and face him with a cheerful readiness that was like healing balm to his distracted and jaded energies! How pleased he was to see them with such evident willingness place their valuable time and business aptitude at his disposal! This was very much owing to the fact that he never

obtruded undeserving cases on their attention or vexed their ears with unreasonable requests. "I have always experienced," wrote the present occupant of one of the highest offices in the Dominion, "the greatest pleasure in listening to anything you had to say, or reading any correspondence you cared to forward, regarding prison reform, as it has been apparent to me whenever I came in contact with you that you had a thorough knowledge of the subject, and was always prepared to look at matters from a reasonable point of view." He rejoiced in the friendship of alert men; and they too felt refreshed by their intercourse with such a transparently good man. A note not only of genuine respect, but of tender affection, seems instinctively to creep into the correspondence of men in high station, from the Prime Minister downwards, when writing to Torrance.

At the time of his retirement last November it was felt by those who had been long and intimately associated with him that a fitting opportunity had come for showing their high appreciation of his character and work. Accordingly a movement was started to raise a sum of money for presentation to him. Even in connection with deserving objects there is often need for importunity in asking for subscriptions. It was altogether different in this case. There was a readiness and heartiness in giving which was singularly refreshing. One of the collectors stated that he had never met with such cordiality. The very first gentleman he had spoken to had said at once: "Oh, Torrance! Put me down for £100." The total amount contributed was £532. In making the

presentation Mr Justice Williams, president of the Patients and Prisoners' Aid Society, bore very clear and hearty testimony to the devoted Christian life of Mr Torrance and the invaluable work he had done during his long term of service. "It had been his good fortune," he is reported to have said, "to be associated with Mr Torrance for the past thirty years. He had had frequent communication with him, and he had always been struck by his immense charity, his great sagacity, and the capable way he had of dealing with men who were about the most difficult persons to deal with. He meant people of the criminal classes. Mr Torrance was now leaving them, but what a happy vista of recollections for him to look back upon! During the past thirty years how many of the sick he had comforted, how many of the poor he had assisted, and how many unfortunate prisoners discharged from gaol he had given new hope and new life to! All these things would indeed be a blessing for him to remember during the remainder of his career. His service to the community had been great indeed. He had sacrificed himself. He had not sought earthly riches or reward, but the services he had rendered were more than earthly. There was the Master Who was able to reward him." His Honor concluded with such words as sincere men only utter in each others' hearing when under the stress of deep emotion their inmost hearts are laid bare. The words are these: "And now, Mr Torrance, it is my pleasant duty to offer you this testimonial. It is for pure love and sincerest affection, respect, and goodwill, from your fellow-citizens.

During the rest of your life you will have the blessings and prayers of your fellow-citizens accompanying you."

The rest of his life was as bitter and wearisome as unremitting pain could make it. But with the failure of bodily ease and comfort the deep sources of his spiritual life became more manifest to others and more satisfying to himself. His favourite passages of Holy Scripture as life ebbed slowly away were the one hundred and third Psalm and the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. A lady heard about his love for the Psalm. She had read it often before, but she said to herself if such a good man as Mr Torrance speaks in that way about the Psalm there must be more in it than I supposed; and she began to read it with new interest, and found in it fresh glimpses of Divine goodness and fresh reasons for gratitude and fresh calls to a life of practical piety. As to his fondness for the great eulogy of love in St. Paul's epistle, it is just another illustration of the words which Browning puts into the mouth of St. John in "A Death in the Desert"—

For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear—believe the Aged Friend—
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be—hath been, indeed—and is.

His funeral was very large, and representative of all classes of Dunedin citizens. Not a few who followed the bier thought of the widow whom they had seen so calm and patient in her great sorrow. They were glad that she had been such a true help-meet to him, and that her quiet and gentle ministeries had helped to smooth many

a rugged spot in the way by which they twain had to go. To her and to the family consisting of one son and three daughters he has left the priceless legacy of a good name and a heritage of worthy deeds.

It is a long way from the fatherless boy in Edinburgh, who looked out so wistfully upon a world that seemed at first somewhat inhospitable, to the agent of the Patients and Prisoners' Aid Society in Dunedin, whom his fellow-citizens of every denomination delighted to honour. Every step in the long ascent had been honestly won, and the blessedness that was not altogether wanting in the darkest hours now crowns the useful career with undying splendour.



MEMORIALS

OF

JOHN A. TORRANCE.

GAOL REMINISCENCES.

STORY OF A LIFE'S LAST YEAR.

Though a prisoner, he was liked by gaol officers and those of his prison mates whose regard was worth having. When, therefore, he launched out upon his second life-course they sincerely wished it might be long, prosperous, and happy. But "boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth," says the wise man of Scripture, doubtless speaking from his personal knowledge of life as well as by inspiration.

Mention of gaol inmates usually suggests the idea of illdoers colloquially termed "gaol birds." As seen in the mass and in broad-shouldered "uniforms," all prisoners are alike in appearance, as they are by judicial conviction. But in prison, as out of it, men differ; and the

difference between the habit and repute and the man once in the position of a condemned transgressor should not be ignored.

The face is generally a fair index of character. "Tell me which man you think the worst," said the gaoler to a visiting friend as they looked from a window into a prison exercise yard. The latter ran his eye over the group and singled out a creature with a long record of dark deeds, who had escaped the gibbet only by turning Queen's evidence against his fiend-mates. He was, as he looked, far and away the worst. The visitor was next asked to say which face he liked best, and he pointed to a man in his early thirties, who, with hands joined behind and eyes bent on the ground, walked by himself. He was Richard Dale.

He was a member of a good family, and had a good wife and loveable little girl and happy home. He also held an honourable position in a large establishment, and it goes without saying that he attained to it by his conspicuous effectiveness in previous positions, both in respect of ability and the discharge of the duties entrusted to him as step by step he ascended the rungs of the ladder. As I write from memory I cannot speak with preciseness as to all the facts and details. Suffice it to say that gambling—worst and most pernicious of all vices—was the cause of his downfall. I have before me a piece written by another man who may further on form the subject of a paper, and in it he says—

I have gambled and lost
That priceless pearl—name.

words which express Richard Dale's sense of utter ruin when his cell door closed upon him. It was the old story. He had gambled and lost—not only his name, but more than he possessed.

In my early youth my lot for a time was cast among gamblers. Possessed by the betting craze, some of my office mates were wont to stake small sums on every conceivable occasion, and in the absence of any outside thing of gambling interest they played for pennies, sixpences, and shillings with tiny marked metal blocks (business implements) that served as dice. To me, as to other young fellows, it was a position of serious danger; but in my case one thing, I believe, deprived the temptation of its seductive power—my mother's influence, which in my consciousness overshadowed and hedged me; but for it, under God, I might have been drawn into the vortex which engulfed numbers of my compeers. During the week they played for money yet to be earned, and when they reckoned up on pay day some had their business earnings added to considerably, while others had mere fragments of what they had worked for to carry away. More than that, it sometimes happened that individuals had to give up every penny of their week's wages and still have to face a gambling debt to be met out of the next week's pay. Two things amazed me—first, the complacency of both losers and winners—the coolness with which losers defrayed their debts, and the heartlessness with which winners pocketed the earnings of their mates;—and, secondly, the fact that often fellows worked on through

the days of the week to make money, not to take to their homes, but to meet gambling liabilities already incurred! But, above all, the scunnering sense of honour which ruled amongst them filled me with a loathing for the contemptible mania, and it has clung to me all through the nearly half-a-century that has passed since then. Whatever debts are disregarded, the debt of honour (!) must be met. A fig for legitimate liabilities and for the claims of home, parents, wives, children! The former must be left to take their chance, and the latter may have to endure pinching, hardship, bitterness; but the debt of honour, which springs from the most dishonourable of all motives, and is sapped to the core with dishonour—it must take precedence and be paramount, and, in whatever other respect there is failure, it must be met. Among his fraternity the gambler and bettor must preserve his fair name as an honourable man, however infamously and with worse than brutal selfishness he may sacrifice the interests of others! What an outrageous perversion of judgment!

Richard Dale had gambled and lost more than he possessed, and to conserve his good name he must meet his debt of honour. Hence, like many before and since his day, he took a loan out of what in the way of business passed through his hands. He was just the man to spurn the idea of theft or of embezzlement. It was a loan for a period, and in good time he would, out of his salary, make good the amount borrowed, and his principals would be none the wiser! That was all! If those who enter upon such dangerous action would stop

their gambling then the risky (not to say immoral) expedient might serve their purpose. But, judging by the cases within my ken, they don't. Against their better judgment they continue the indulgence in the hope of making "a rise" that will effectually clear their feet, and then they will cry "Halt"—and desist! And so they sink deeper and deeper, until too hopelessly deep to avert detection,—and then——

To Richard Dale's wife his downfall was more bitter than death, but she clung to him with all the ardour a devoted woman is capable of. The weaker showed herself the stronger, and the hitherto dependent one became the pron, and by her moral support she saved him from sinking into utterly unnerving despair. The Court proceedings over, she had several interviews with him, and then with her girl she joined her parents in a neighbouring colony. Thence she maintained communication with him, and by her letters infused cheer and hopefulness into his heart. Meanwhile he worked with others on the lower Portobello road, the Prison Hulk being then anchored in Broad Bay. As I have said, Richard Dale won for himself the respect of officers and the better class of prisoners. His sentence was for one year, and by good conduct he lessened it by some two months. As the time for his discharge drew near, and after preparing a home for him and otherwise paving his way in the colony whither she had gone, his wife returned to Dunedin with her daughter, and upon his release she met him and took him to temporary quarters. No time was lost, and they were soon on board the ship which was to

carry them to their new life-field. As the vessel, gliding down the channel to the open sea, came abreast of Broad Bay, officers and men, who knew he was on board, looked towards her with interest. Observing him at the stern, several on shore and on the hulk slightly raised their caps, and he responded in like manner. It can readily be supposed that when a few minutes later the South Head was rounded husband and wife and daughter would be filled with gladness as, realising they were leaving behind them the gloom of the sad experience they had passed through, they saw the sun rising in their heaven of hope. While the steamer careered onward at full speed, and the foam-girt panorama lying to the westward swept past, there was nothing to suggest danger. Yet each stroke of the engine bore the vessel and its living freight nearer their doom. The destruction, as is usual in such cases, was without warning. Just when the dusk was deepening into night all on board were suddenly made aware they were among the breakers, and next moment the ship crashed on to the reef out from the shore. There was little wind, but a heavy sea rolled in upon the coast, and the space between the wreck and the land was a seething mass of foam. While there was yet dim light several men courageously ventured upon the surge and succeeded in landing, and one or two promptly took steps to obtain assistance; while the others, when the darkness of the moonless night had settled upon the scene, lit fires to keep alive the hopes of the endangered people, around whom the sea raged. In the dense darkness the ship was lost to

view, but some of her lights, ever moving with the lurching, flickered through the gloom. After hours had gone by—awful hours alike to all on board and on land—two sounds from the wreck were heard amid the noise of the waters. First there was a vigorous cheer as a distant ship's light, bespeaking coming rescue, appeared in the south. But shortly after the cheer a shriek as from many voices rang out—a wail of despair that sounded above the boom of the rollers,—and simultaneously with it the lights disappeared. With increased anxiety the men on shore longed and prayed for the dawn, and vainly strained their eyes seaward; but when at length the dawn creepingly dispelled the darkness their worst fears were confirmed. Where the good ship had stood only the merciless waves broke and moaned. The bitter shriek in the darkness was the death-cry of over a hundred souls, as the vessel, loosened from the reef by the heaving sea, plunged into the depths.

Richard Dale and his noble wife and daughter were among the victims, and so their last year on earth, with its sad history and bitterness and hopes, was ended. Oh, the pity of it!



CHARLES FERMIT.

A DREADFUL DOWNCOME AND WRECKED LIFE.

The lock clicked as the warder turned the key of the prison-cell door, the door swung open, and there, upon what served as a plank-bed during the night and seat during the day, sat a young man of 25, of comely appearance and in his own clothes, which were of a clerical cast. This was in the old gaol. In the new prison hammocks and stools are provided. In answer to my question as to what had brought him there, he said, casting his eyes down sadly, "Drink! drink!" Gripping him by the shoulder, I exclaimed, "Man, you do not mean to say that you, a young fellow, love the drink?" With a sigh he replied, "I do ; I do." And he bent himself till his face rested on his knees. The scene was suggestive of unutterable hopelessness.

As I subsequently gathered from one source and another, this is Charles Fermit's story:—He was the only son of a respected clergyman in the Homeland. In stature he was not far short of six feet, was fairly strong, and of fair complexion ; and as a University-bred man his scholastic training, with his intelligence and fluency, fitted him for a useful and honourable life. But his story is an all too common one—just the kind that can be told by not a few swaggers in this colony and

in the Australian back-blocks—prodigals without the prodigal's repentance and return to better ways. During his university course he got into profligate habits, and became a source of disappointment, grief, and shame to his family, who had naturally looked forward to seeing him pursue an honourable and useful ministerial career. In spite of expostulations and frequent repentings and promises of amendment his unsteadiness increased, and his conduct scandalised his relations and seriously affected his father's standing. Then, as in so many similar cases, he was shipped off to New Zealand—of course in the hope that, cast upon his own resources and separated from his loose associates, he would be led to enter upon a worthy course of life. Fully equipped, with money sufficient to give him a fair start, and the subject of fervent prayer, and quite likely with good purpose on his own part, he launched out for life anew in the distant colony. But while outwardly all things had become new, inwardly the old things remained, and it only required the appropriate influences to fire the old inclinations and revive the old habits. He soon made new associates, and, destitute of guiding principle, he readily linked himself with men of kindred spirit. The wretched facility with which drink was too often obtainable on board emigrant ships was also a curse to him ; and so the voyage, instead of being a means of strengthening him for colonial life, landed him penniless, and weaker than when he turned from his native shore.

His first experiences in the colony were varied. Sometimes he was in employment, and living steadily ;

and sometimes out of work through excess ; and, as in all such cases, he sank lower morally and in the esteem of his fellows. But an unlooked-for change gave promise of complete rescue from his worse-than-useless life and gladdened the hearts of friends who longed for his recovery. In the up-country district where he was for a time located a series of evangelistic services was held. He attended the meetings, and was to all appearances brought under the influence of the Gospel truth. As he remained steadfast and made good progress he was admitted into the church as an earnest and effective worker, and so comported himself as to win general confidence and esteem.

From my reading of his character I should say he lacked the essential element of humility. Pope speaks of

Pride, the never-failing vice of fools.

and Goldsmith, speaking of the class, says,

Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of humankind pass by.

Such pride, if it engenders a contemptuous frame of mind, is just as likely as spiritual pride to retard growth in grace, and to lead to disregard of the needed warning, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Therein, I think, lay Charles's weakness. He was markedly proud of his abilities and scholastic attainments. Be that as it may, for a considerable time all went well, and with the help of friends the mastership of a small country school was obtained for him, and his

winning method of dealing with children fitted him for it. While occupying that position he continued to render good service in the Church, first as an enthusiastic Sabbath school teacher, and then as a telling speaker at Gospel meetings; and altogether he gave promise of great usefulness. His power as a speaker was above the common, and his ready utterance and knowledge of Scripture, with the imagery he could put into his addresses, made him a great favourite.

He was enrolled as one of the students of the denomination to which he belonged, and placed under a course of training, while at the same time he assisted in conducting services in schoolhouses and up-country churches. As the next step in advance it was arranged that he should on a certain Sunday occupy the pulpit in a small church in an Otago town, the members and adherents of which looked forward with interest to his appearance. There were no railways in the colony in those days—only Cobb's lumbering coach,—and after a long and wearisome journey he arrived at his destination on the Saturday afternoon. There was no one to meet him, and with his portmanteau in hand, he made for the minister's residence. But, unfortunately, the minister was out. After waiting for a time he started for a walk. And then followed events which, but for their seriousness, would give to the whole affair an aspect of consummate ludicrousness.

It is well known that persons who have been addicted to intemperance are not infrequently subject to cravings that arise they cannot tell how, and it is also a

fact, of which there are too many sad examples, that many a man, after longer or shorter abstinence, has fallen again through the force of such cravings. It is difficult to know what should be done when the old appetite asserts itself. Cases differ, and need to be differently dealt with. But it may safely be said that, besides seeking God's help to resist, the man who honestly desires to fight the fiend within him should turn his mind absorbingly upon some worthy subject or work, or resort to some strong suitable medicine—anything short of virulent poison rather than the poison of alcohol—or allow himself to be treated by a wise medical man. Many have tided over the trying period by such expedients. Had Charles promptly adopted some such method his ruin would perhaps have been averted. Fagged by his long journey, and very likely under the nervous strain induced by the prospect of the morrow's work, with its new surroundings, and probably with the view of bracing himself for the ordeal, he thought he would venture one "nip"—only one—to revive him. In that evil moment he entered a publichouse, got the "nip," and then resumed his walk. As the beast of the forest that tastes blood has its thirst whetted for more, so that one drink increased the craving of the foolish man, and after proceeding a short distance further he entered another place and had another nip. This went on until his brain was afire, and he lost all self-control.

This was bad enough, but what followed was worse by far ; and by Charles Fermit's mad folly was brought about a climax that made hope of his recovery impos-

sible. While sauntering besottedly through a street in which a trader's merchandise was exposed at the shop-door he lifted and walked away with some articles. The act was an open one, and was seen by several persons—the shopman among them. In less than five minutes the muddled man was in the grip of a constable, on his way to the lock-up, where he spent the night in drunken slumber. Only when he awoke from his debauch was he aware of his disgraceful position. But shame made him keep silence. He made no statements to the police regarding himself, nor did he make any attempt to palliate his conduct or to secure the intervention of friends. In abject despair he yielded himself to his fate, and his offence resulted in a sentence of three months' imprisonment, with hard labour, in the city prison. Of course, the Church authorities became aware of all the wretched circumstances; and as Charles, by his silence had prevented a public scandal, involving the name of the church, they wisely allowed the matter to be hushed up. In that way they showed worldly wisdom. I marvelled, however, that they did not at the same time try to win the fallen one back, instead of ignoring the apostolic injunction, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." So far as they were concerned he was simply an outcast.

As might be expected, he served his sentence quietly—was in gaol parlance a "good prisoner,"—and he made himself useful by acting in the evenings as schoolmaster on behalf of illiterate young fellows. I

had frequent conversations with him, but he was careful not to make promises with respect to his future course, and seemed to have settled into a hopeless though not melancholy state. One day I happened to incidentally allude to his educational advantages, and remarked that these in themselves formed a ground of hope for better things, and ought to be a stimulus to him. With unwonted vehemence he exclaimed, "Curse my educational advantages! I wish I was without them. They do me no good, but only add to my wretchedness." And I believe they did.

Preacher though he had been and had intended to be, he rather surprised me by averring that he was full of doubts and difficulties with regard to this, that, and the other Scripture doctrine, and by evincing a disposition to excuse his misbehaviour, and sin generally, on the ground of temperament. That, however, is quite a common thing with those whose lives are loose and who make no effort to restrain their evil inclinations; and, of course, it is born of the desire to silence the conscience. He thus unwittingly placed himself on a level with prison habitués—the pronounced criminal class—who to a man are freethinkers. One of the fraternity went the length one day of telling me that he had "conscientious scruples" in relation to attendance at the Gaol Sunday services, on the ground that he did not believe in the Scriptures! At the moment I had it on the end of my tongue to say—but refrained, as I did not wish to anger him—that it was strange to hear HIM talk of "conscientious scruples" in face of the fact that

he had recorded against him crimes and convictions as long as his arm. But in view of the open profession Charles Fermit had made as a Sabbath school teacher and preacher I was not prepared to hear HIM give expression to such doubts and to thoughts that savoured of libertinism. It does not necessarily follow that in his open profession and in his rôle of religious teacher and preacher he had been a deliberate hypocrite; he may have been sincere, but "not according to knowledge," and may have been prompted by the best intentions. I rather think, now that his conduct had so palpably belied his profession that the attitude he assumed as a doubter was the outcome of his unwillingness to bend his soul in contrition and frankly acknowledge to God and to himself that he had acted shamefully, and to begin again the battle of life in humble dependence upon Divine mercy and help. There was but one way of meeting his alleged difficulties, and that was by quoting the Saviour's unanswerable declaration, "If any man will do God's will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. I also reminded him of the encouraging assurance that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," and that "we shall know if we follow on to know the Lord."

At that time I had no means at my disposal to help discharged prisoners. But I assisted him as far as I could, financially and otherwise. He very creditably showed a disposition to fight his way and to take in hand any kind of work, and for that I respected him. The first job he tackled for a few shillings was the cleaning

of a small drain, when he made a woful mess of himself owing to his lack of knowledge of the proper method of procedure, for his University training did not qualify him for that kind of labour. While he was thus, one way and another ekeing out an existence, fortune again favoured him. He received monetary assistance from his father; and as he had lost caste in the colony, acting on the advice of friends, he sailed for pastures new in South America. I never learned how it fared with him there. The last I heard of him was that he returned from the Western Continent to his home in Scotland; that he again let himself loose there, to the renewed vexation of his family; and that he was once more sent abroad.



OH, THAT LADDIE!

Poor Davie! He was a queer, exasperating laddie, all the more so because of his seeming ability to conduct himself properly if he liked. Looking back, I see strong men scratching their heads in perplexity, or itching to pound or rend him, yet helpless to resist the merriment his doings occasioned. A stolid "Don't know" was all that could be drawn from him in explanation of his mad freaks.

He was one of a large family in the interior of Otago, had seen sixteen summers, and was motherless. I have no knowledge of his earlier years, but his later manifestations suggest that his boyhood was more or less characterised by meaningless waywardness and acts of mischief. Or, as Havelock Ellis would put it, he had "moral insensibility and perversity, with the two accessory anomalies, impudence and lack of forethought." Be that as it may, when well on in his teens he entered upon a reckless law-breaking course, and by his clumsiness revealed himself as the culprit. Out of regard to his father, a deservedly respected working man, these were condoned, but his persistent illdoings made restrictive measures imperative, and he was lodged in the small up-country gaol. An astounding escapade quickly followed, and with it Davie's humorous side came to light.

In the early Otago days discoveries were made in different parts of the province of what were supposed to be valuable beds of stone, somewhat like those in the Oamaru district, but differing from the latter in that the stone, from its putty-like softness, could be cut out with spades in blocks of requisite size. One of these quarries can be seen on what is known as the "Rise," between Caversham and the Industrial School; and until recent years the "stone" was in evidence in Dunedin in parts of the old Middle District School, old Knox Church, and the old Gaol. It was believed that when exposed to the air it would become hard and durable; but while by exposure it loses its moisture, it does not harden, but falls away in scales, and with a bit of iron, or even with the fingernails, one could by perseverance reduce it to dust or work his way through it.

Davie's first prison was built of that "stone," and he was the only inmate. He was duly bolted in. Next morning it was seen that he had "bolted" out. A gaping hole in the wall explained how. This was droll enough, but his next action showed that, with all his dullness, he could perpetrate a joke, though as a "saving grace" his humour could not serve him much. It was early morning, and while making for his home he came upon a cobbler at work within an open doorway. Halting, he informed the worker that close by there was a nice, commodious empty building suitable for boot and shoe work, and advising the man of leather not to miss "such a splendid chance," he moved on his way with a leer. Not having the wit to avoid the police by strata-

gem, he was soon back in the "nice, commodious building." Meantime the gap had been filled up with cement or masonry. Now, aware of the Jack Shepherd character of his charge, the officer resolved to keep a sharp eye on him, and to that end visited the cell in the middle of the night. He was staggered. The callant was at work on another part of the wall, and had succeeded in scratching a hole halfway through. The keeper then handcuffed him, with his hands in front. At daylight it was found that, in spite of the cramping irons, he had all but completed the hole. To make assurance doubly sure the now exasperated official next night shackled the determined urchin with his hands behind. This done, he was confident the gaol wall was safe. But yet another surprise awaited him. Turning his reflector into the boy's cell during the silent hours he found Davie with his hands in front, though still shackled, clawing away at the wall! The lad had drawn himself together and forced his feet back between his arms.

If Davie had been an ordinary youth he might—and would—have served his sentence in doing light cleaning work in that lock-up and on the ground around it, but as it was evident that the only effect of his detention there was to lay on the charge-officer the irksome "hard labour" of preventing his escape, he was transferred to Dunedin. From the phrenologist's and physiognomist's point of view there was no difficulty in forming an estimate of the lad. He was strong, squarely built, of good size for his age, had an abnorm-

ally large bullety head, his round and coarse face indicated intellectuality below the average, but it was also suggestive of dogged though not sour temper ; and I took him to be, in gaol parlance, a "hard case"—one who by tactful handling might be led, but would not be driven. He was not, however, destitute of intelligence. As Mansie Waugh would express it, he had "cleverality" of a kind.

As is usual with young first offenders, he was as much as possible kept aloof from the other prisoners, and the duties allotted him were light and miscellaneous. While I do not think he was of an indolent disposition, he certainly manifested a decided disinclination to work in prison, and did it in a laggard, slip-shod, don't-care fashion. But I ascribed it to his aversion to authority rather than to exertion.

It would frustrate one of the objects of penal treatment—namely, the recovery to a better mind—if criminal offenders were to be slave-driven. At the same time, while justice ought to be tempered with mercy, there should be obtained from prisoners useful labour that shall as far as possible recoup the cost they entail upon the State ; and being during their periods of servitude under authority and discipline, as are the soldiers who form the King's army and the sailors who man the fleet, prisoners must needs be ordered. The question of "ordering" versus "requesting" penal servitude and hard-labour men to do their work cropped up in Dunedin in a curious way a few years ago. A number of prisoners

were brought before the court for insubordination. The chief warden explained the circumstances, and in his evidence he got as far as to say, "I ordered the men to their work——" when one of the justices interjected, "Oh! You ORDERED them? Did it not occur to you to REQUEST them to go to their work?" The look of amused bewilderment in the officer's face was a sufficient answer without the astonished "No-o-o" he drawled out. But others besides the officers were first amazed and then amused, and to the prisoners the very unusual display given by the representative of justice and order was an exceptional and enjoyable bit of fun. They well knew that to prevent the gaol from being a pandemonium strict discipline is essential, and that, even for their own sakes as men under enforced restraint and discipline, prompt and unquestioning obedience is imperative. They therefore concluded he was a novice in gaol matters, or that for some reason or other he spoke against his better judgment. If he had known what the prisoners then thought, and afterwards said of him, he would have seen as he had never before the force of Burns's wise words—

Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oorself's as ithers see us ;
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
And foolish notion.

While in prison the authoritative rule must in common sense and of necessity obtain. Cases may, and do, arise that not only warrant, but call for, less imperious and more persuasive treatment—Davie, for example.

He was a curious mixture. Dour to stubbornness when commanded, he was surprisingly susceptible to kindness ; and while the official tone set his back up, and brought the angry gleam to his eye, he would with alacrity obey when persuasively directed. As confirmatory of this, one incident connected with the later days of his short confinement in Dunedin Gaol may be given here, though not in its proper place. He had again and again seriously misbehaved and been punished, only, however, to still more rouse his spirit of opposition. Pitying the boy, and moved by kindly desire, the visiting justice asked me to make special effort to bring him to a more tractable frame of mind. I accordingly had him brought to me in the inner office. But the moment he entered I saw that the officer's imperious command to "go in there!" had fired his rebellious spirit, and his defiant bearing was by no means assuring—suggesting, indeed, that he was quite prepared to "have it out" with me. Presently, however, he and I were good friends ; and after a short, quiet talk he professed contrition and promised to acquit himself aright, and left me with a smile and manifest good purpose. But the moment he passed into the corridor the smile and good purpose were gone, and all because the officer imperiously and with pointed finger ordered him to resume his work. Halting for an instant, and drawing himself up, the fiery youth scowled defiance, and then, with dogged, angry tread, he lounged away. The incident warranted the plain words I addressed to that officer.

I have said that the pother Davie occasioned was intensified by his seeming ability to conduct himself properly if he liked. But extraordinary freaks in which he indulged showed he was not so capable after all, and that his unmanageableness was really due to a mental rather than moral cause. For example, when one morning the door of his cell was unlocked something strange met the warder's gaze. In response to the bell-toll the lad ought to have been on his feet clothed and ready to step out when the door was opened. But he was still full length on his stretcher and under the blankets, and in the space between the bed and the wall was a bulky dark substance not there when he was closed in the night before. What was it? Well, it was his coarse bed coverlet, not in its normal condition as a coverlet, but in the form of leagues of worsted thread loosely thrown down and heaped up! He had leisurely teased out the threads of the coverlet one by one during the lightsome hours of the morning, either through sheer thoughtlessness or from pure love of mischief. But no explanation could be got from him beyond his stolid "Don't know."

The gaol authorities now made up their minds not to be surprised by anything Davie might do. But they were. On another morning, when the youth's cell-door was pushed back, the warder was amazed to see the space formerly occupied with the mountain of worsted thread filled with an enormous number of sheets of printed paper. They were the leaves of five books he had been provided with for his self-improvement and entertainment—a Bible, a narrative of travels and adventures,

a school "Reader," a geography, and an arithmetic,—and among the heap were the fragments of his shattered slate! As with the coverlet, so with the books. Waking with the dawn, and while waiting for the morning bell-call, he had torn out, mostly one by one, the leaves of the Bible and then of the other volumes, and thrown them on to the floor—rather tedious work, one would think, seeing that the leaves of the five books totalled fully a thousand!

It was at this juncture that I was asked to try my hand on the angular lad. Knowing that oftentimes the sense of possession has a beneficial influence upon boys, it occurred to me that Davie might be induced to act with propriety and good sense if the books given him for his use were his own property. This thought led me, to his manifest delight, to supply him with volumes similar to those he had destroyed, and also a slate, each bearing his own name in my handwriting. The result seemed satisfactory, and for a few days there was good hope regarding him. But it was short lived. In one of his mad moods he disposed of them all as he had those previously entrusted to him, and once more he provided material for a big paper fire in one of the yards.

Davie's tricky proclivities kept the gaol people in high fever and himself in hot water. Neither officers nor prisoners were exempt from his torments, and he was seemingly oblivious to the punitive consequences to himself. "I shall not be again surprised at anything the fellow may do," said a warder. But ere long he was led to exclaim, "Well, well! Who would have believed it?"

A very "pointed" practical joke upon some of the outside workers drew from them the vengeful cry, "Wring his neck!" The carpenter had been effecting some repairs, and happened to leave his nail-box in the lower corridor for a moment or two. Davie's eye fell on a package of tacks, and his purpose was formed. Sneaking a small handful of the tacks while the officer's back was turned, and slipping into the large empty yard he hurriedly sprinkled the tacks on a lengthy form against the wall. It was the hour for the return of the men. When they trooped in some of them proceeded to their lavation at the inner end of the yard, while the others, waiting their turn at the basins, sat down on the form. What followed can readily be imagined. As the surprised and annoyed men freed themselves from the tiny spikes, and helped each other in the interesting proceeding, Davie, peeping round the corner guffawed and clapped his hands with glee. Then the truth was out. But the offender escaped the proposed sanguinary punishment by sheltering himself behind the warders. The men's anger was soon exhausted, and during the next few days there was a deal of laughter and good-natured chaffing among them while engaged on the works. A seaman was overheard asking a mate how he liked the infra. dig. tacks, to which the questioned man, also a sailor, speaking nautically, replied moralisingly, "Ah, Bill, you and I were on a worse tack when we sailed into this port." But to the jocular dispenser of the tacks the immediate result—solitary and "short tack" (gaol parlance for bread and water)—was no joke.

Notwithstanding that Davie was indebted to the officers for saving him from the deserved drubbing at the hands of the outraged men, he victimised them scurvily a few days afterwards. Ordered to sweep the upper corridor and the stairs leading from it, he filled the air with the dust by his rough use of the broom, and was sharply told by the warders, who were in the corridor below, not to smother them by "swinging the broom so"; and to avoid the dust they sheltered themselves against the stair wall. The officer's sharp tone had roused the lad's bulldog nature. Carefully gathering the sweepings into a heap, he jerked the lot through between the rails upon them, to the disfigurement of their uniforms and irritation of their eyes and throats. Of course, for that paltry trick his ears were rightly made to smart.

On yet another day his provoking spirit asserted itself, and with just as little cause. He was told to mop the asphalt floor of the lower corridor, and, said the officer as he stepped into the yard, "Give it a good sousing, be quick about it, and do it well." Presently there were the sounds of a swish and metallic thud and rattling. Returning to the corridor, the official found the floor flooded, the pitcher on its side, and Davie scowlingly straight up against the wall, with his hands in his pockets. Asked what it all meant, the dour callant replied, "You told me to souse the floor well, and to do it quickly, and I have." The officer checked his first angry impulse, and allowed pity to take its place. "Now, Davie," he said in gentle tone, "I'll not repeat this, and

we must not let the gaoler see it. Hurry up, my boy, and bring another mop, and we'll clean the place up nicely." The better chord in the lad's soul was touched, and it vibrated. In a moment Davie was all willing activity, and threw himself into the work as if for dear life, and all because he had been kindly spoken to! He could be led, but would not be driven.

Worrying incidents followed in quick succession, and it was decided to send the lad to another prison, where there was a greater variety of employment suitable for youths than in Dunedin Gaol, and it was thought and hoped he would do better there. But he soon showed what manner of man he was, and persistently indulged in queer and aggravating pranks, in spite of counsels, warnings, and punishments, all still more clearly evidencing his ingrained propensity for mischief. Here is one of his tricks there. In that, as in other prisons, the several periods of the day were notified by the tolling of the large bell. It happened that a part of the bell-rope had become frayed by rubbing against a beam, and to prevent further injury Davie was ordered to bind a piece of canvas tightly round the chafed part. Seemingly he did the easy bit of work satisfactorily, and the rope was to all appearance made strong. But again the unexpected ensued. By-and-bye the ringer proceeded to toll the hour. As usual, he pulled gently to give the bell the needed swing, then he tugged forcefully, and next gave a vigorous haul, when—snap!—and the long and heavy rope—all but the wee bit at the top end—came whack on to the man's head and encircled his body like

a boa constrictor bent on his destruction. The young tormentor had wantonly cut the strands, leaving only two or three weak threads, and as he had tied the canvas on loosely the threads readily yielded to the strain. The authorities were wrathful, but Davie giggled.

The incorrigible youth became more erratic, reckless, and uncontrollable ; his aggravating and worrying acts more frequent, and he was finally pronounced by medical men to be irresponsible. That meant that the gaol was not the proper place for him. He was consequently transferred to the home for the insane, and it may be taken for granted that he will end his days there, if he is still alive.

With all his troublesomeness, Davie had a large place in my heart. He was tricky, but not vicious. Mentally handicapped as he was, he could not be judged as would evil-disposed lads in full possession of their mental powers. His head was at fault more than his heart. He was therefore to be commiserated more than blamed. Exasperating as were his impulses and doings, and whatever the bother he might give to those over him, I would rather he continued as he was when I was associated with him than that he should sink into the condition of an absolutely mindless, babbling imbecile. I had a liking for poor Davie, and the feeling is still fresh. As I look back through the years I repeat "Oh, that laddie!"

WILD CAT'S PLAY IN GAOL.



Few think of a gaol as at all a likely place for light-heartedness, and fewer still would dream that anything of the nature of wild cat's play in a place of incarceration could possibly occur. It is the not uncommon idea that all persons held in durance vile move about sadly, soul-stricken, and with their spirits below zero. Said an intelligent lady to me when I informed her I was on my way to the prison, "Ah, these poor prisoners! I often think about them."—(A long-drawn sigh.) "You must," she continued tentatively, "meet with many sorrowful hearts there." My response was, "Would to God there were more sorrow among them than there is ; then would there be more hope of them." It may reasonably be believed that almost always there are some who realise their position, and who rightly mourn, not on their own account only, but because of the suffering they have, by their folly, brought into the lives of others (parents, wives, children, etc.). In the case of such, to use the words of a Dunedin prison rhymster, there is a sense

Deeply engraved on the heart
Or what's lost and what's gained
By playing a criminal part.

And in another of his pieces the same man wails—

Oh, what a load is life

When nourished by what crime yields!

But I grieve to say that the general run of habitual inmates display cold-blooded unconcern, and talk and joke and laugh as if they had not a regret or care; while a few—confirmed, brooding criminals—are swayed only by their feeling of hostility against law and against society. They are, as a rule, serious and sober enough in their demeanour, but of the emotion of sorrow in its true meaning they have none. I am here speaking of men as they appear when together in the exercise yards, whatever may be their thoughts and feelings when alone in their bolted cells.

In the old gaol, where there were four yards, big and small, and when prisoners slept and dined in companies, there were opportunities for indulgence in humour and fun that do not now exist. On entering a yard one day I was surprised to find four men severally stationed in the corners very gleefully engaged in the pastime of tossing round a rag ball from one to the other. To me it was an unusual sight, but by no means unpleasant. It amused me. They were “inside men,” and their duties comprised the keeping of the prison clean and tidy. The notorious Butler was one of them. The warder in charge of that part had gone to attend to something elsewhere, and they availed themselves of the chance of a few minutes’ boyish recreation. When I appeared they desisted, and assumed a guilty look, but

I set them at ease by telling them not to mind me—that I was neither a warder nor a spy nor a “spiffler” (telltale)—and so they were left to the harmless play that for a brief space served to break the monotony of their pent-up life. By-play of that kind is impossible in the new gaol. In the old prison, also, prisoners to a large extent slept in dormitories tiered in immigrant-ship fashion with eight, ten, twelve, or even sixteen bunks, and together they sat down in companies to their food in tabled rooms. In the present gaol (the fifth since the Otago province was founded) each prisoner has his cell and hammock, and each receives his rations at his cell door, which is then closed upon him. This also applies to the female side. An amusing incident serves to illustrate the difference between the old and new order of things. Years ago an old, querrulous citizen of Dunedin named Murphy, who would not keep the peace with a quietly-disposed neighbour, because of some difference of opinion anent a dividing fence, and who also defied the police and the magistrate, was sent to gaol for a few days, in the hope that the experience would bring him to reason. Quite properly, he was put into the division occupied by some 14 or 16 of the better class of inmates. After his first night in prison, Murphy and the others sat down to breakfast—porridge, with a spoonful of sugar laid on each plateful. The supply of one man, however, who sat next to the newcomer, differed from that of the rest, he being allowed milk as a “medical comfort.” He was a character, and familiarly known as Tommy. Though not reckoned to be of the desperate and danger-

ous sort, he was a thoroughly seasoned gaol habitué, and his boast was that he had never been in a gaol in which he could not "get over" the doctor and the chaplain. That meant that by sneaking pretence, plausibility, and hypocrisy he was an adept in getting on the soft side of these functionaries. Early in my career as prison chaplain he all but succeeded in "besting" me, but happily my eyes were opened, and his scheme failed. The milk in the pannikin beside his plate was proof that he had "got over" the doctor. In dismay Murphy cast his eyes over the dishes of porridge ranged on each side of the table, and then with bated breath he asked, "Is this what we get?" "Oh, no," said a young fellow; "not necessarily. You can get whatever you like—tea or coffee or cocoa, and buttered toast, with grilled chops or rump steak or sausages, or ham and eggs. Anything you like. You have only to ask for it, and you'll get it." Of course, this sally caused merriment and bantering. Murphy quite understood, but he felt aggrieved that his right-hand neighbour should fare better than himself. Tommy, while joining in the chaffing, happened to turn his head for a moment, and when he again faced his meal he was more than mortified by seeing his pannikin bottom upwards in Murphy's hand, and the contents flooding the latter's porridge. His rage was unbounded, and there is no saying what the result would have been if the younger men had not intervened. As it was, for a second or two Tommy shook the robber of his "medical comfort" as a terrier would a rat. Such doings belong to the past, and cannot now be.

MAORI STATE PRISONERS.

In 1870 an exceptional interest centred in the Gaol by the commital to its safe keeping, under sentence of eight years' penal servitude for high treason, of quite a little army of Taranaki warriors ; and once more, as in the early sixties, it was crowded to excess. The movement which resulted in the arrest of several hundred Maoris was the latest rising against the British. It was promptly checked, and it may safely be assumed it will be the last that history will record. Dunedin Gaol had its share of the defeated band, and northern prisons had theirs. Again, nine years later, our gaol had within its walls another dusky band from the north—the Parihaka disturbers of the peace. Between the two companies there was a very striking contrast, the difference for the worse in the case of the second band being suggestive of the rapid degeneracy of the Maori race—at all events, in some parts. The Taranakis, headed by their chief, an aged, tall, profusely tattooed man of princely appearance and demeanour, and reverentially looked up to by all, were a fine body—men of splendid physique and of noble spirit and mien ; but the Parihaka folk, a mixture of full Maoris and half-castes and quarter-castes, were in every respect a poor lot—in appearance, as in fact,

aimless, mischievous, larrikin louts, altogether destitute of the qualities that marked the warriors who preceded them. The Taranakis—calm, thoughtful, decorous, respectful—were deeply sympathised with, and it was a pleasure to minister to their comfort and happiness, the more so as they were manifestly grateful for any service rendered them or consideration shown them. On the other hand, the general bearing of the riff-raff from Parihaka inclined one to cuff their ears. The Taranaki men displayed a kindly disposition, conducted themselves with amazing good humour, and all, save the more advanced in life, joined heartily on the prison works in various places as if in competitive spirit with the white men. They certainly evinced an energy and purpose not commonly ascribed to the aboriginal natives. The formation of the road which connects the higher part of Dunedin with Mornington was exclusively theirs; hence its name—"The Maori Road." They were also sincerely religious, and in addition to the ministrations in their own language of the Rev. Mr Blake, then of Kaikorai Presbyterian Church, and formerly Provincial Maori Missionary, they held services at which their older men were the speakers. They were treated with much kindness and leniency, and under the supervision of the Maori protector everything possible was done to lessen the bitterness of their imprisonment and enforced absence from their homes. To keep them from wearying they were supplied with turning implements and large quantities of greenstone, and with plodding industry they produced ornaments of various kinds—rings, hearts,

watch-chain pendants, etc.—which they were permitted to sell. Opportunities were also allowed them to indulge in their own pastimes. On one occasion I was present at a war canoe performance in the large hall of the debtor's prison. Seated on the floor boards, and working their arms and bodies as if manipulating the oars, and with marvellous precision keeping time with all their movements, they sonorously, and as with one great voice, poured out their war-song, with the usual grotesque projecting tongue, rolling eye, and fierce facial expression accompaniments. It was altogether very realistic, and made the onlookers for the moment forget the absence of the floating boat and paddles and open sky. And when at the close a tinful of lollies was produced, and each man invited to take a "neffy," their severely war-like presentation gave place to the lightsome gladness of children.

But the change from their free life among their native hills and plains and vales soon told on the poor Taranakis. Young herculean men one after another developed symptoms of phthisis and heart disease, and ere long nearly a dozen succumbed. The sufferers were assiduously cared for by the prison surgeon, but most of them were removed to the Hospital, where they received the special treatment which could not be given them in the Gaol. There, as in the prison, by reason of their winning ways as well as their hapless circumstances, they were objects of great interest and sympathy. Until their strength was quite gone it was their wont to write and to sketch those uncouth figures that

are the outcome of the peculiar Maori fancy. In this connection I made a slip for which I was sorry. I was known to them as "miniter," and occasionally spent pleasant times with them. One day I furnished six or seven of them, all on their feet, with writing paper and pencils. Like children coming into possession of toys, they were pleased, and joyously expressed their appreciation through one fine young callant who had a smattering of English. By way of fun I said to him, "Now you are grateful and friendly, but if you met me in your own country you would, I suppose, shoot me as soon as look at me." He had just a glimmering of what the words meant. With a sober look he asked me to "say again," and I repeated the remark. Seizing my hand excitedly, he rang out an emphatic "No !—no !" The others looked on wonderingly, but the moment he explained they too gripped me, and, in Maori, dramatically repeated his assurance. Their manner showed they felt stung, and I regretted the incident.

The death scene connected with one of them was engraven on my memory. There was nothing remarkable about it. It was simply pathetic and impressive. He was a man of slightly over 30, and had a wife and children at his native pa in the far north, and his old father shared his exile. His illness was so sudden and rapid as to make his removal to the Hospital impossible. A prison cell was therefore his sick and death chamber. It was night. Close to the sufferer was a small table provided for the occasion ; on it were two lighted candles and an open Maori Bible, and the only sounds heard were the

laboured breathing of the dying man and the measured tread of the warder in the adjoining corridor. The old tattooed father sat at the foot of the bed, his head resting on his hand, while his eyes, with a look of indescribable agony, were fixed on his son's face. The chief warder and I were the only others present. Just then, through a break in the clouds, the silvery light of the full moon passed in between the bars of the small window and halted for a few seconds on the inner side of the cell door. With a smile and exclamation and pointed finger the dying man directed his father's attention to it. The old man turned and looked, and, with a nod, said something in response. The Psalmist speaks of the light that rules the night as one of God's faithful witnesses in the heavens. The momentary ray suggested some thought to the sufferer. I know not what. Perhaps it made him think of the greater Light—the Light of the world and of men—and of the divine faithfulness of which He is the evidence ; and maybe, also, the suffering man had some thought of the light of the eternal day beyond the dark valley through which he was passing. After a brief silence the young man again spoke to his father, at the same time turning his eyes on the warder and myself. Evidently in compliance with his son's request, the old man rose, muttered some unintelligible words, and with quiet dignity and a significant glance he grasped and pressed the officer's hand, and next mine, and resumed his seat. Then the young man, also speaking words we did not understand, and likewise with a look full of meaning, extended his hand to us respectively, pressed

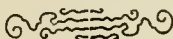
ours, and, turning from us, he placed his palm on the open Bible and rested his eyes upon it, as if with affection and trustfulness. I could only conjecture that the hand pressure, with the words spoken, was meant to express good will and gratitude for sympathetic attentions given him. An hour later the cell was in darkness and the door closed, but not bolted and padlocked. The inanimate form within needed not to be kept in with bar and key, nor could bolts and locks prevent the escape to a higher and purer sphere and to liberty of the man who occupied the form.

It need scarcely be said that when it was found their imprisonment was telling so seriously upon the Maori State prisoners the Government promptly released them and conveyed them back to their homes. But while it is cause for sorrow that so many of them succumbed to conditions entirely foreign to the life they had been accustomed to, it is satisfactory to know that their humane treatment during their short incarceration went a long way to change their views regarding the whites and to subdue their inimical spirit. It is a pleasing fact that subsequently, when another rising in the north was threatened, these men refused to take up arms, and the Taranakis have remained friendly ever since. Among my personal friends is a young member of the tribe—a descendant of one of the prisoners of nearly 30 years ago—a fine, promising fellow, now under training for one of the learned professions—and he tells me that the experience of his people at our hands is to this day gratefully spoken of.

DARK NIGHT THOUGHTS.

Fun is sometimes indulged in by prisoners, even by long-sentence convicts; but it would be too much to expect all of them to carry their lightheartedness into their cells, and far less that they would retain it in their wakeful hours during the silent night watches. It is then that there are dark thoughts, soul-aching remembrances, bitter regrets, save in the case of the hardened, who have become familiar with and inured to gaol life. I do not mean that men who are morally hardened have no dark thoughts of any sort. 'Tis true they have, and pity 'tis 'tis true, because their thoughts too often take the shape of dark purposes to be carried out when liberty is regained, in the hope of a "rise" being made without durance vile again resulting. Many a crime has been conceived and hatched in the quietness and darkness of prison cells, the chief consideration being to avoid mistakes made in previous "business transactions." But, especially in the case of those to whom the experience is new, the musings in the gaol cell, when the sole occupant lies on his stretcher, and when all lights are extinguished and the hush of silence is over the establishment, are not of that nature. Then it is—at least, sometimes—the prisoner thinks of his criminal

folly and realises all that his fall involves—loss of position, of bright prospect, of character, of name, of friends, and the worse-than-death wound he has given to those that love him and whom he loves—mother, wife, or some other. If cell walls could speak they would tell of groanings and sighings and sobbings and tears, of keen remorse and self-cursings, and (which is better) of repentings and honest resolves in the direction of a better life, and of soul-breathings for Divine forgiveness and help and guidance. Unhappily, however, the Gaol atmosphere is not favourable to noble yearnings. Hence, especially in the case of long-sentence prisoners, good purposes are too often short lived, and pass away like the morning cloud and the early dew, and the last state of those to whom this applies is worse than the first. Their sun has gone down in their heaven of hope, and they gradually settle into that happy-go-lucky recklessness from which in most instances it seems impossible to dislodge them, and which fixes their doom as members of the criminal class.



SHORT, SHARP, STINGING SENTENCES.

Many years ago the conviction was forced upon me—and since then it has deepened—that numbers of young men would be saved from the vicious influence of gaol life, and the judicial manufacture of confirmed criminals be thereby to some extent prevented, if our punitive system were to provide for some kind of short, sharp, stinging punishment in the case of persons in the grasp of the law for the first time. The First Offenders' Probation Act nobly meets the need so far, but it applies only to certain classes of offenders. As I write, many instances of men manifesting great emotion when received into Gaol recur to me.

The first (A. R.) was a young fellow of good family, and while occupying a position of trust he was, through gambling, led to wrongfully use the money of his employer—as usual, as a loan, to be repaid out of his hoped-for winnings in the gambling hell. After his first night in Gaol I entered his cell, and instantly he threw himself upon me, convulsed to the utmost degree. Shamefully though he had acted, I could not but pity him, and the thought anew suggested itself that if this man could be given some short, sharp, stinging punishment—the obligation of restitution, at least to some extent, being laid upon him—he would probably begin life anew under the sway of principles the reverse of

those that had resulted in his ruin. As it was, he served a long sentence, to which, as also to his Gaol associates, he gradually and calmly became reconciled, and all sense of his degradation seemed to die out. Upon his discharge he was helped to a distant part of the world, and when I last heard of him he was pursuing a course not at all conducive to his welfare or the comfort of his family. I do not mean to say that this is the case with all. Far from it. I could with pleasure name some now living worthily in spite of the pernicious influences that incessantly bore upon them during their long incarceration ; but I can also, with sorrow, think of others who manifestly left the Gaol more demoralised than when they entered it. It is not unreasonable to suppose that some of the latter would have been recovered from their downward course if a short and stinging punishment had been inflicted, instead of long years of penal servitude, or if hopeful inducements to well-doing, such as are provided by the First Offenders' Act, had been afforded them.

The second instance is also that of a young man (J. F.) convicted of an offence to which the First Offenders' Act does not apply. But he was not sentenced right off, because his counsel urged a point of law for settlement in the Court of Appeal ; and pending the sitting of that court he was lodged in Gaol. When he entered the prison he was overwhelmed with shame and anguish ; but when, four months afterwards, the point was decided adversely and a long sentence passed upon him, he unconcernedly settled down "to do" his time.

“FIRST OFFENDERS’ PROBATION ACT, 1886.”

Snappishly said an up-country magistrate in response to an appeal to place a youth—a convicted first offender—under this Act, “Certainly not! I look upon that Act as an abomination. It is nothing but a premium to crime and an encouragement to crime, and I therefore set my face against it.” These are strong words, and they very clearly show that he who spoke them did not know what he was talking about, and that he had not duly and fairly considered the wise and humane provision he so sweepingly denounced. Shutting his eyes to the merciful purpose for which the Act was brought into existence, he was seemingly determined, irrespective of all other considerations, to make the law in its bearing upon all offenders vindictive, and vindictive only. But, that official’s dictum notwithstanding, the good that has resulted from the Act cannot be over-estimated. As might reasonably be expected, it has now and then failed through its terms not being complied with by badly-inclined individuals—success in every instance, indeed, would be very surprising ;—but the fact is that in the

great majority of cases it has saved first offenders from being confirmed criminals, and been instrumental in winning back to decent life young men and women who had glided into evil ways. The Act does not apply to all classes of offenders. It does not apply to (I here quote from the Act) "persons convicted of murder, attempted murder, burglary, coining, corrosive fluid-throwing, demanding money with menaces, extortion of money under threats of accusations of crime, placing an explosive substance to endanger life or property, rape, robbery with violence, or an offence attended with irreparable or serious consequences, and either endangering life or indicating in the opinion of the court an established criminal intention on the part of the accused; and includes any indictable offence which may be dealt with and disposed of by a court of summary jurisdiction." It should also be understood that the Act is applicable only to persons guilty ONCE of any one of the crimes that come within its scope. A culprit for the first time in the law's grip is not deemed a first offender if he is guilty of several acts of wrong-doing committed at different times, even though they may be all of a like character, and may really constitute one continuous violation—embezzlement, for example. Embezzlement is ordinarily the outcome of gambling, or of what is termed "fast living"; and as a rule it is not detected until a number of dishonest acts have been perpetrated. The culprit in that case, notwithstanding that he is before the court for the first time, is not a first offender in the sense that there is only one charge against him; and

therefore the benefits of probation do not extend to him. Some time ago, however, I observed that a judge in the North Island strained the law for the sake of a young man who was guilty of several continuous acts of embezzlement. His Honor Mr Justice Williams, who earnestly desires that the judicial treatment of convicted persons, especially young persons, while necessarily punitive, and intended to be deterrent as regards others, should also be with a view to the reformation of the individuals concerned, has repeatedly conferred with me on the subject of the extension of the Act to second offenders ; and it is to be hoped he will, through legislative enactment, attain his wish.

Briefly the Act, which in all its provisions applies to females equally with males, operates thus : When a first offender is put "on probation"—is placed for a period under the Act—he is passed over to the probation officer for the district in which he has been convicted. The probationer is then handed a printed form, after it has been read over to him and been subscribed to by him, he thereby signifying his acceptance of the terms and his purpose to honestly adhere to them. By the form he is made distinctly to understand that during the time embraced by his sentence he must report himself once a month to the probation officer and pay the monthly instalments of the sum he may have been adjudged to pay ; he must keep steadily at work ; if he falls out of employment or changes his place of employment or residence he must promptly report the fact ; he must not remove from the district without permission, and if he

is permitted to remove he is transferred to the supervision of the probation officer of the district to which he goes ; he must keep aloof from bad company and from all drinking and gambling places and improper houses ; must not loiter about the streets at night, nor without notification be absent from his place of residence during night ; and must in every respect conduct himself as a decent citizen. If he violates any of the conditions it is the duty of the probation officer to order his arrest, in which case he is lodged in gaol, brought before the court at its next sitting, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment equal to the full length of his probation term, no matter how much of it may have gone by. A discretionary power, however, is given to the probation officer first to warn violators of the conditions, and if the warning is unheeded, then to order arrest.

All this shows that, as the Act states, the laudable object is "TO REFORM WITHOUT IMPRISONMENT." Usually—especially in Supreme Court cases—the probationer is ordered to pay by monthly instalments a few pounds towards the cost of prosecution, or in like manner repay any money he may have been convicted of appropriating ; and, also, ere an offender can have the benefits of the Act extended to him, he must have previously borne a fairly good character, and must have a home to go to and work to enter upon, or have some reliable person to take him by the hand. In numbers of instances I have met the last-mentioned requirement ; and when needful I co-operate with the probation officer.

On the face of it, the Act is anything but a premium to crime or an encouragement to crime. The encouragement is all the other way. As I have said, it now and then fails through young men of the libertine stamp not complying with its terms (just as all good things fail more or less through the badness and folly of men); and in all such cases the fools, after repeated warnings, are properly and necessarily arrested and sent to gaol. But it is a most gratifying fact that the failures are few in comparison with the successful cases, and all through the colony there are many who furnish living evidence of the good moral tendency of the Act, and of the wisdom of so tempering justice with mercy as to provide facilities for the recovery of the erring. The advantages are not limited to the persons immediately concerned. To see this we have but to think of the sorrow, shame, and loss caused to families by the illdoing of one member; and, on the other hand, of the satisfaction, peace, and gain resulting from his welldoing. The community in which he lives and those among whom he moves are also the better for his restored character; and the country at large gains.

Here is a typical case:—One day a young man (R. S.) of 24 or 25 presented himself for the last time at the office of Mr Phillips (late gaoler) while I was there. He was received genially. His appearance was that of a well-doing artisan. He duly paid his last monthly instalment (his probation term being twelve months), and Mr Phillips duly made his last entry in the printed form. A short, pleasant conversation then

ensued, in the course of which he said he was getting on well and was very happy ; and as he was leaving Mr Phillips gave his hand a warm grip and addressed to him a few cheery words and counselled him to keep on as he was doing, to which he responded that he "meant to." That young man belonged to a decent family. He had of course, with others, got into loose ways, which culminated in a crime. Placed under the Act, conscious of his mad folly, feeling his disgrace, and grateful for his escape from a year's hard labour with the prison gang, he honestly set himself, with God's help, to live worthily. For 12 months he had experienced the advantages and happiness of a steadygoing life, and the probability was that he would adhere to his "I mean to." He and his family (parents and brothers and sisters), and those with whom he mingled, and the community in which he dwelt, and the colony at large—in his case all were—are—the better for the First Offenders' Probation Act.

One somewhat amusing incident is in this connection worth noting. Three brothers, all young and of rather prepossessing appearance, got into the hands of the police for stealing a quantity of rabbitskins. Their story was that they were impelled to the theft by want—that they had vainly tramped the country in quest of work, and when they came upon the bundles lying outside of a farm-stead they yielded to the temptation to carry them off to raise a little money by them. They were all put on probation. Employment on a farm near Dunedin was found for two of them, and for the third—

the youngest, a lad of nineteen—I got a situation in a respectable restaurant. It so happened that the male cook of the establishment was a drouthy fellow, but he was prohibited from going out for liquor and forbidden to fetch it into the house. The thirsty rascal induced the simple youth to bring him some secretly, and the latter was caught in the act by the lady of the house. She gave him a sound hearing, and emphasised his ingratitude in acting so deceitfully after she had given him employment solely to save him from going to gaol. He wept, expressed regret, and promised to be faithful in future. She mentioned the matter to me, but asked me not to speak to him about it. I said I would not, but that as she had informed me I was bound to report it to the probation officer. I did so, but requested him not to say anything until the lad made his monthly call. In due course he presented himself. After the usual entry had been made in the printed form Mr Phillips quietly asked, “And how are you getting on?” “Oh, very well, sir,” was the reply. “Are you giving entire satisfaction to your mistress?” inquired Mr Phillips. “I’m trying to, sir.” “No hitch has occurred, has there?” “No-o.” “You are sure everything is going on smoothly?” “Ye-s.” Then significantly turning his eyes sideways upon him, Mr Phillips, in quite a confidential whisper, said, “I say ! What about that bottle of brandy you tried to smuggle in to the cook?” The lad’s face was a study as for a few moments he stood in speechless amazement. Then he murmured, “How do you come to know that, sir?” “How did I come to know it?” responded Mr

Phillips. "I know everything about you. Your mistress has not told me anything, for I haven't seen her. But I know everything. I know when you do right, and I know when you do wrong. And I will know everything about you so long as you are in my charge. I want you to do right, and therefore I got you put on probation; Mr Torrance wants you to do right, and therefore he got you your situation; and your mistress wants you to do right, and therefore she gave you employment. If you do not do right you wrong all of us as well as yourself, and run the risk of six months' imprisonment. Now, don't be a fool. Be a man. Be honest, upright, true. Let there be no mean, secret dodges, and in the end you will find that in every respect it will be the better for you."

Humbled and somewhat dazed, the lad returned to his work, no doubt with the eerie feeling that eyes he could not see were continually upon him; and to this day he does not know how the probation officer came to know "that." I am glad to say he profited by the lesson. It made him more thoughtful and had the effect of rousing him to greater force of character. The latest information I received of him and his brothers was of an assuring nature.

HONOURABLE, BUT WEAK.

In connection with Supreme Court and Police Court cases the plea of drunken incapability is all too common, and judges and magistrates are too ready to give credence to the lying stories worthless characters whine out, to the effect that when they did the wrong they have to answer for they didn't know what they were doing. Of course, the law does not allow drunkenness to be an excuse for crime, yet gentlemen who have to administer the law often in good faith accept the plea of "the drink" as an extenuating circumstance, and inflict mitigated sentences accordingly. In such cases the clear-headed, sharp-witted scoundrels who make crime their business, and who "on principle" never drink to excess, laugh in their sleeve and indulge in a little jubilation, and also in comments the reverse of grateful or complimentary to the judgment of the Bench that dealt with them. But, on the other hand, occasional instances show that the good and honourable purposes of men of a non-criminal stamp are sometimes overcome by their craving for intoxicating liquor. Here are two typical cases:—

The first (M.S.), a middle-aged man, was in the late seventies committed to gaol to await his trial for a

serious indictable offence. He had all the appearance of a decent working man, had never been "in trouble" before, and manifestly realised the shamefulness of his position. The dread of a sentence of hard labour quite unnerved him. I liked his face and spirit, and pitied him—the more so as he was a stranger to Dunedin and had not a friend to give him countenance. According to his statement—which I was inclined to believe,—his moral guilt was at least doubtful, whatever view the jury might take of the legal aspect of the case. Destitute of money or property, he could not but envy the more fortunate men who were able to engage counsel, and his sense of helplessness was intensified by their cheery hopefulness. Fair play is a jewel, and to ensure him a fair trial I made known his case to an eminent pleader (now a judge of the Supreme Court). That gentleman interviewed the prisoner, was favourably impressed, and generously signified his willingness to conduct the defence, in the same breath intimating that his fee was £15. To the prisoner the first announcement came as an earnest of deliverance, and sent hope flashing into his soul; but the second as quickly dispelled the hope, and sounded like the knell of death; for, as he replied, he had not a penny to bless himself with. "The question of payment can be settled afterwards," added his legal friend with characteristic brusqueness; "I'll defend you, and—my fee is £15."

M. S. was duly tried, ably defended, and acquitted. He then left the city and passed from my mind. Some ten months or so afterwards, well clad and looking

healthy and happy, he presented himself at my house, and placed before me seven £1 notes and a half-sovereign, as the first instalment of his debt to the lawyer, to whom he gratefully ascribed his escape from conviction and possible (if not certain) penal servitude. The balance, he said, would be paid as soon as he was able to make up the amount.

Promptly waiting upon the legal gentleman, I handed him the money. Having rendered the service purely out of kindness, and with no thought of remuneration, he had not entered the case in his books, and therefore had some difficulty in remembering it. It goes without saying that the man's honourable conduct gratified him, as it did me. He did not, however, pocket the whole of the £7 10s, but passed £2 of it to me for charitable purposes.

Now comes the vexing bit. After having through the months laboured and denied himself to keep faith with the gentleman who befriended him in his time of need, and after he had gone exactly half-way in that direction, M. S. began to drink. Probably he met with some former companion and was induced to take a "nip," which very likely had the effect of reviving an old tendency. Anyhow, he got helplessly on the spree. To save him from a worse state he was urged to quit the city and return to where he came from. I am sorry to say I have not seen him since then, nor heard from or of him.

The second case—that of R. B.—also had its pleasing and grievous sides. He was a first-class artisan,

but woefully given to drink. His outbreaks were frequent, and he was several times in gaol for short periods for drunkenness and petty thefts committed while under the influence of the drink and to procure drink. A few days after he had finished one short sentence he asked me to guarantee payment of a small debt he had incurred for board. At first I declined, on the ground that I could not look on him as an object of charity, and then paid the amount to the restaurant-keeper right off. A fortnight later he called at my house during my absence and handed my wife more than half the amount I paid on his account, and promised to make good the balance by the end of the following week. She told me he looked well and cheery, and was manifestly not drinking. As his act savoured of hopefulness and seemed to indicate earnest purpose to resist his inward foe I resolved to give him a little more encouraging attention. Alas ! alas ! Before the week was over he broke out, in the maddest and clumsiest possible way perpetrated a burglary, was lodged in gaol, and in due course was tried, convicted, and sentenced to three years' penal servitude ! He served his time quietly and sadly. As his transaction with me showed that all good purpose was not burned out of him I befriended him on his discharge, and in compliance with his wish helped him to another colony. Several years passed by, during which I heard nothing of him, and then my wife and I took a run to the "other side." One day, while we were slowly pacing a street in one of the cities we visited, we were brought to a halt by hearing my name pronounced in a tone of surprise.

Turning round, we came face to face with R. B., who seemed as if he would have liked to hug me. He looked well. The information he then gave, and that I subsequently got from others regarding him, was gratifying indeed. He had had his wanderings, his ups and downs and hardships, and times of success in the matter of employment; but from the day on which he finished his three years' sentence he had not tasted drink. When my wife and I met him he was only in partial work, was living with a Christian family, and was a member of a Presbyterian Church. He also showed he had become imbued with Christian spirit. In compliance with his invitation, I spent evenings with him at his lodgings, and on a Sunday sat with him in his church pew, and had the satisfaction of hearing as fine a gospel sermon as I ever listened to. The last time I heard of my friend he was still holding on.

HOSPITAL REMINISCENCES.

A LIVING EPISTLE OF CHRIST.

David — was a man of thirty years of age or thereabouts, a native of Scotland, a farm labourer, and unmarried. Chest trouble had gripped him, and his malady was aggravated by attacks of gasping asthma—a form of suffering understood only by those who have, like David and myself, endured its spasms. Of his previous history I have no personal knowledge, but after his death I heard more than one farmer he had served speak of him in the highest terms as an estimable and dependable workman. One especially informed me that, instead of frittering away the evenings in lounging idleness or gossip or amusement, it was David's wont to quietly improve himself by reading beside the log fire, and with the aid of the oil lamp ; or, under the moon and stars, walk the fields which were the scene of his daily labour, and there, Isaac like, meditate on the deep things of God, chiefly the Divine love in Christ. Thus he became rooted and grounded in the faith, and unconsciously prepared himself for the long, weary illness through which he was to pass ere he entered into "the rest that remaineth."

In the Hospital David showed himself to be a man of definite Christian principle and experience, and during his

many months' residence in the institution the new things in him which succeeded the old steadily developed, deepening his peace, brightening his hope, and increasing his amiability and quiet and unobtrusive yet telling usefulness. He was an intelligent reader, but his well-studied Bible mainly gave him material for thought ; and by it his life-course was directed. Among its many marked passages was that comprising the vital question and answer, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." Subject as he was to a racking cough, extreme difficulty of breathing, and to times of great physical weakness and protracted agony, he would not have been human if his mood had never varied. Sometimes, though not often, his spirit fell to zero, and in spite of him the dark questions agitated him, as they did another great sufferer—"Will God be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? Has He forgotten to be gracious?" But, like the greater sufferer and exemplar in Gethsemane, while praying that if possible the cup might pass from him, he found relief by merging his will in that of his Father, and the angel of peace strengthened him.

David's views of the truth as it is in Jesus were at once simple and profound. His faith was like that of the child, and Divine love was the theme in which he delighted most. Though ever circumspect in his conduct, yet he had a deep sense of his unlikeness to the Great Ideal, and relied wholly upon the Saviour as the Lord his righteousness ; and the more he felt the law in his

members warring against the law of his mind, leading him to ask, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" the more did he shelter himself behind the finished work on Calvary and in the Rock of Ages cleft for him, exclaiming "I thank God I get deliverance through Jesus Christ my Lord!"

Occasional spells of comparative ease enabled David to move about and to enjoy in the garden the sunlight and fresh air, but these were quickly followed by spasms that tried him sorely, and then willing hands ministered to him. I saw him in one of these. It had lasted several days, off and on. Pillows were piled up around him as he sat in bed, with strength exhausted, and the arms of a stronger man—a patient—gave him further support. His incessant cough racked him, the perspiration stood out on his face, and he struggled for breath as a drowning man in deep water. Putting both his hands on the bed slowly, by a great effort he altered his position just a tiny bit, but it gave some slight ease to his aching and fleshless body. With a sweet smile of satisfaction he gaspingly said, "Man, amn't I thankful I can do that!"

I have made allusion to David's quiet and unobtrusive yet telling usefulness in the Hospital wards. He said little, but somehow his calm, thoughtful face and the gleam of his big, expressive eyes had a subduing effect even on rough men. I give one illustrative incident out of a number. As it takes all sorts of persons to make up a world, so the inmates of a large hospital are made up of all sorts of persons; and among the latter are sometimes found men of avowed infidel or atheistical

beliefs, as well as pronounced Christians. I say avowed, because I have frequently observed that some men, blatantly bold when in their strength and with years of life seemingly before them, change their views as their health changes, and show in dire suffering and weakness, and when death appears to be drawing near, that they have really no faith in the negations they so bravely expressed. Said a denier of God and of the Gospel as he bade good-bye to his dying brother atheist, "Don't let go, Tom. Be firm, and hold on. Keep firm hold." To which, in despairing tone, the expiring man replied, "I would like to, George. I would like to hold on to—to something—if—if—if I had something—to—to—hold on to!" One such man caused David great agony of soul and deep concern on account of the young men who were allowing themselves to be banefully influenced by him. The man had sustained an injury to one hand, but he was otherwise healthy and vigorous. The non-existence of a Supreme Creator and Ruler was the idea that dominated him. He had it not only in his heart, but also on the brain. It was his one thought. George Macdonald's chief character in his book entitled "Paul Faber, Surgeon," is a good type of this class of men. "There is no God" was the thought that ruled him, and the words were ever on his lips. If when conversing in a general way with others nothing was said that could lead to his favourite theme he would make a way for it, or if there was no conversation at all he would abruptly launch out. Intelligent and forceful, a fluent speaker, and charged with arguments he had imbibed

from the pernicious literature he had made his study, he was, as a rule, listened to with interest by some of the young fellows in the ward—not to their ennoblement, and much to David's vexation of soul. One day the man stood with several others at the inner end of the ward, and there he held forth in the hearing of David, who was then in a low and distressed condition. The sufferer now and then gazed anxiously in the direction of the group, and at length he caught the eye of the atheistic instructor. The muscles of his face moved as by strong emotion and mental pain.

His heart was hot within him;
Like a living coal his heart was.

In the keen penetrating look from his large and expressive eyes there was a hypnotic power as of something not human, and the man felt it. It held him, and he read what was behind—righteous indignation, infinite pity, and reproof. The others, observing his fixed look on the sufferer, turned towards David, and as his piercing glance passed from one to another they shrinkingly glided one by one from the spot. But in response to David's beckoning the man came to his bed and sat down. David gripped his hand, and after a few moments' silence gaspingly said, "I do not mean to be rude. But as you deem it your right to speak plainly and strongly, you will in fairness allow me the same right, and I am sure that in this your sense of fairness is on my side." Then opening his Bible at Psalm xiv. and Psalm liii. he read the words in both places—"The fool hath said in his heart there

is no God. Corrupt are they," etc. "You see," he continued, "that was God's declaration ages ago—twice given. There is therefore nothing new in the position you have taken up or in the sentiments you express. History is only repeating itself in you, as in every age it has in men like you. Why do you labour and speak in that way? What good purpose can it serve you or these young fellows? Be sure of this, that while they flatter you now by listening to you, they won't bless you for it. As you see, God here says (putting his finger on one of the passages) that in the lives of those who so speak there is something seriously wrong. You know whether or not that is so in your case. As a dying man who has found God to be very precious, I urge you to pause and think, and look into your heart and motives and life. Is not this thought of yours you so dwell upon really the outcome of a wish? And does not the wish spring from something in your life you know to be wrong? Don't shirk the questions, but face them manfully and sensibly. God has made you a man of favoured parts, but you are fearfully abusing them, and sooner or later the fact will come home to you with crushing power, and you will be made to realise that what God said so long ago is true—that it is the fool who says in his heart that there is no God. I urge you to desist and to turn your thoughts and powers into a more rational and nobler channel. If you do not, then you will find you are the loser, and that it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks—hard for THEE, mark you, as a greater and better man than either of us found

it so in His own case. Bear with my plain speaking, for I am your friend, and faithful are the wounds of a friend." Thus frankly and pleadingly, and with many choking halts, David spoke. The man gave no reply, showed no resentment, and walked away with subdued manner. During his few remaining days in the Hospital he maintained silence, and occasionally went sympathetically to David's bed to render little helps, and on the day of his discharge he quietly pressed the sufferer's hand and departed. A few minutes later a package of fruit and biscuits suitable for invalids was handed in at the Hospital gate for David—a trivial thing in itself, but yet a suggestive touch of nature.

Many of David's sayings were pithy, full of deep meaning, and expressive of the experience of his own disciplined soul. Here is an instance:—In the same ward was another man named Christie—a heart-disease case. He had lived badly, but the seriousness of his condition sobered him. Giving, as it seemed, earnest thought to the Gospel story, he impressed those interested in him with the belief that he had undergone great spiritual change. While conversing with David one day I made favourable allusion to this man, whereupon, to my surprise, he moved his head deprecatingly and sadly. After a pause he made the startling remark, "A Christian, you know, is known by his sins as well as by his graces—that is, by the effect which any lapse he may make has upon him. And," he added, "God's truth tells us that Christ saves us FROM our sins, not IN our sins." Com-

plying with my request, he explained that through the careless action of a fellow-patient some liquid fell on to Christie's bed, and that the latter passionately wished the worst of all ills to befall the offender. "But," I asked, "what manifestation did he give when he cooled down?" "Ah!" said David, "it is in that that the grievous thing lies. He only laughed at his unreasonable outbreak of temper and his oaths, just as if it were all a good joke. The apostle Peter, you know, when thrown off his guard allowed himself to be overcome by what, no doubt, was an old habit in his fishing days, but when he awoke to the shamefulness of his words and action he wept in deep contrition. But Christie gave no sign of regret. With the others he made merry over his lapse. We must be charitable, and hope for the best, but Christie himself gives the gravest cause for fear that he in an unchanged and deceived man." It is only right I should add that, largely through David's instrumentality, Christie was to all appearance brought to see himself and his gross conduct aright, and that, so far as man could judge, he yielded himself to the Saviour's saving and controlling grace, and finally passed away with the words of the hope of the Gospel on his lips.

These examples give evidence of David's high moral and spiritual tone. They also reveal how he maintained his Christian strength and comfort by contemplating the things unseen and eternal, and that, through his confidence in the Saviour and in the hope of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, his severe and protracted sufferings were, in his estimation, made to

shrink by comparison into the space of a moment and into lightness. It can readily be understood that, being of such stamp, he would in his gentle and unobtrusive way make his influence felt for good in the Hospital ward. As a matter of fact, numbers lived to bless his memory. Christianity is not selfish, is not like the sponge—sucking in and never spontaneously giving out; and even in the cases of the most diffident and retiring of men, when the Spirit of Christ dwells in them, they are instinctively led to more or less labour for the welfare of others. It was so with David. He encouraged ward-mates to sit beside him, and when able to move about a little it was his wont to seat himself by the bed of some sufferer and quietly and simply, yet with telling power, unfold, the doctrine that Christ, “though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.” There was that about him that drew his fellows to him and made him welcome to most, that gave force to his counsels, quietly and mildly given, and enabled him to impart to them a measure of light and happiness, the secret of his power being in the fact that he was “an epistle of Christ, seen and read of all men.” His kindly, sympathetic bearing, consistency and buoyancy amid his sufferings, and the hope that lightened up his own wan face made even the openly profane and infidel feel that there is reality in Christ’s religion.

Though in David’s case the end frequently seemed near, at the last it came somewhat suddenly. On the

day before he passed away a patient from another ward, whose physical and spiritual experiences were much like David's, went to his bedside. David was labouring hard for breath ; and, desiring not to disturb him, his friend was about to retire, when David beckoned him to come nearer, and whispered, "I'm very weak, but I'm very nice, very nice !" (meaning that he was happy and joyous, strong in his trust in the Saviour, and waiting for the messenger who would raise him out of the dark valley and bear him away to be "forever with the Lord.") He was conscious to the last moment. I was with him then. It was a cold winter night, just at the turning from night to morning, and strong gusts of wind were battering the rain against the window panes close to the dying man's bed. Pointing a finger upward, he whispered, amid frequent checking spasms, "There shall be no night there. Like the Psalmist, I wish to hasten my escape from this life's windy storm and tempest. But He maketh the storm a calm. I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that—you know the rest. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown—THE crown—You know. He has come to receive me unto Himself, that where He is there I also——" The storm continued, but David was away on the wings of the early morning to the abiding haven where storms and trials and suffering are unknown.

The funeral was without pomp. The unadorned coffin bore neither name nor date, and no stone marks the spot where his remains were laid. Three persons—myself one of them—followed his body to the grave, into which it was lowered in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.



THE LOST FOUND.

It was in the early seventies, yet it is all as of yesterday. The persons and incidents and scenes—the poor girl and her drawn-out agony, the stricken mother and her anguish too great and too deep for tears or audible expression, the deathbed scene, and the double interment in one coffin—all are before me as vividly as they were nearly 30 years ago.

The public maternity wards were then attached to the Hospital. One afternoon a girl of some 20 years, and of comely appearance in feature and dress, presented herself for admission, and after the usual inquiries by the house surgeon and the insertion in the Hospital book of the name she gave—Fanny Boyd—she was duly put under the care of the matron of the department. On that bright, genial day, with the cloudless sky overhead and the city and bay and environing hills gleaming in the sunlight, all Nature seemed to rejoice, and there was responsive cheer in human hearts. But there was none in the soul of the newcomer. She carried no sunlight with her into what was to be her last earthly home. Her sun had gone down in her heaven of hope, and the clouds and darkness of shame, remorse, and despair enshrouded her soul.

She was somewhat below the average height, but had a strong, well-knit frame ; her complexion was fair, her accent English, her bearing modest and graceful, and altogether she had the impress of thorough respectability. During the few weeks which followed nothing out of the ordinary course occurred, excepting that, while she quietly assisted in the general cleaning-up work of the ward, Fanny Boyd evinced an inclination to keep aloof from the other inmates, and was frequently observed to be in tears. Often, though by no means always, young women in like circumstances all too clearly indicate by their lightheartedness and frivolity that they are dead to all proper sense of shame and incapable of the blush in which there is grace. Not so Fanny Boyd. She felt her humiliating position, and, as the sequel showed, with disastrous keenness. Reticent in the extreme, she answered only with sobs all inquiries regarding her friends and as to her intentions and prospects when she left the institution. The colour faded from her cheek, her appetite failed, and in spite of all efforts to enliven her she settled down into deep depression.

At length a tiny, weakly boy nestled at her breast. Now that she had been safely carried through the ordeal it was thought her spirit would revive and that she would speedily mend. Although, however, her travail was past, she did not forget her anguish, nor joyed that a man was born into the world. With deeper and still deepening gloom she bent over her wailing babe and bathed its face with her tears.

About a fortnight before the birth of the child a

police officer inquired at the Hospital if among the inmates there was a girl of a certain name, and he was correctly answered in the negative. Again, two or three days after the birth, a similar inquiry was made by an elderly lady dressed in deep mourning. Her appearance betokened superiority, but the lines in her pleasant face indicated deep disquietude. With earnest eyes and nervous twitching she looked into the face of the chief warder as he replied to her questions; and in answer to her further inquiry, "Are you sure, sir, you have no girl of that name?" he submitted for her inspection the full list of names of inmates. After running her eye down the page she thanked him, with a sigh and facial expression of bitter disappointment, and then slowly left the building, while the warder's eyes sympathetically followed her. He readily took in the situation, and saw that it was a case of search by a sorrowing parent for a lost daughter.

When the old lady reached the street she halted at the fence gate, gazed for the space of a minute on the ground, and then looked in a woe-begone manner alternately to the right and to the left, as if in a quandary as to the course she should take next. But suddenly turning, with quickened pace she retraced her steps to the Hospital, with a new thought agitating her and a new hope inspiring her, and asked if she could be permitted to look into the wards. To that, of course, there could be no objection, and she was at once passed on to the matron. She was led to the first room. After slowly scanning the faces of the women and girls she turned

away with the remark, "No ; not there !" She was then taken to the second room. It so happened that Fanny Boyd occupied the second bed from the door, and from its position it was the first to fall under the eye of an entrant. The matron opened the door and stood aside to give the seeker the full sweep of the apartment. Instantly the eyes of the inquirer and of Fanny Boyd met, simultaneously two piercing cries rang out, and next moment mother and daughter were locked in each other's arms. The girl's expedient to avoid discovery by using a false name was very near being fatally successful.

It then transpired that the girl, after keeping company with a man in the distant part of the colony where she and her mother resided, was forsaken by her seducer ; and, stung with shame, in desperation she fled from her home. She was the only child of her mother, and her mother was a widow. On leaving her home she travelled under the assumed name, and by it she was received into the Hospital ; hence the difficulty in tracing her. After vainly communicating with the police in the cities and chief towns, the mother sallied forth upon her weary journey of discovery, and her maternal love impelled her on from city to town and from town to city in her search for her girl.

A mantle must be thrown over the scenes that followed. The sorrow and struggle on and beside that bed with the sheltering screen around it—sorrow and struggle mutually shared by mother and daughter—were such that the world could not intermeddle with nor un-

interested eyes behold. But there were the unseen interested onlookers to whom screens, and even stone walls, are no bar—the ministering spirits who are sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation—because on that enclosed bed there was one to be saved—saved at once from sin and earth’s sorrows. Suffice it to say that in the unusually distressing circumstances a mother was allowed to tend the sufferer, the light of the Saviour’s love shone into the girl’s heart, she surrendered herself to the Friend of the weary and heavy laden, He dispelled the gloom from her soul, and that “joy of the Lord” which is the strength of poor mortals filled her. After a few weary days’ and nights’ watching, during which the girl gave proof of her emancipation from utter hopelessness, the old mother closed the eyes of her child and of her child’s child, and together they were enclosed in the one coffin and lowered into the one grave. The old mother, the undertaker, the sexton, and myself were the only persons present at the interment. In view of the pitiable facts the occasion was an exceptionally sad one. The day was somewhat dulled by broken clouds that flitted in patches across the sun’s face. As the bodies were being lowered into their last resting place, and the words of the service, “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,” were spoken, drops from a passing stiff shower fell upon the coffin, as if in sympathy with the chief mourner, while the sun’s rays coming through between the clouds shone into the grave, as if to remind her of the eternal light after the awful darkness, and of the “home over there,” where

her loved and lost and found girl—found in a double sense—would watch and wait for her. But the bereaved woman was herself beyond the stage of tear-shedding. Beside the new-made grave she grasped my hand, and with tearless eyes and firm voice, but in a tone that revealed her soul agony, she said, “Make this known, sir; make it known; and tell the story of my poor girl for the warning of other girls!” And then, still tearless, yet thankful that God had led her to seek and find the lost one, she turned away and went back to her desolate home, with her bright hopes shattered and her old heart broken.



THE PRIZE LOST AND THE PRIZE GAINED.

A glance over the past years brings many to remembrance, among them numbers of young men gripped by consumption, who were attracted to our shores by the then reputed marvellous Otago climate, in the hope that after a short sojourn here they would be enabled to return with restored health to their homes in the Mother Islands. But they were doomed never to return. Now that doctors in the Home Country have a fuller knowledge of New Zealand they are not so prone as they were in the earlier days of the colony to send out their consumptives—at all events, to Otago. Of course they did so in good faith, being misled by the exaggerated descriptions given by ardent souls whose first experience in the province was gained during long spells of genial weather. I have a vivid remembrance of one enthusiast's graphic representation. I was young then, and in Scotland. In his letter that colonist made the Otago climate to be such that at all times, night or day, people could with perfect safety lie out in the open—on the plain, or on the brae, or on the hill-top. That fallacy, long since exploded, was in full

swing when the subject of this paper came to the colony in quest of health.

George Gordon (as I shall call him) was a young man of 22. When admitted to the Hospital and received into No. 1 ward something in his appearance suggested that he was out of the ordinary run of hospital patients—that he was of gentle birth and upbringing. His fine, open, intelligent countenance was attractive, and the easy gracefulness and pleasant smile with which he acknowledged kindly help proffered him, and his whole demeanour stamped him as a cultured gentleman. The fell disease had not as yet exerted its wasting effect; but his bright eyes, with their sunken, far-away look, the milky delicateness of his skin, the cherry-ripe lips, and hectic spots on the cheeks, and the short, dry cough—all too clearly showed that phthisis held him for its prey.

Sometimes when invalids who have never before been in an institution of the kind become hospital patients their spirits sink below zero. Some even in imagination see flaming over the entrance Dante's grim words having reference to another place, "Abandon hope all ye who enter here!" This ignorant prejudice prevails to a large extent. But, as a rule, it is effectually dispelled by even a day or two's experience of life in the institution. I say as a rule. It goes without saying that occasionally one and another of the many who pass through the Hospital will not reconcile themselves to it, or from their temperament cannot. There are also people whose strong prejudice prevents them from availing themselves

of the institution, but to whom its homeliness and the gain from the treatment in it would be an agreeable revelation. It is sad that any suffering mortals should endure and pine and die in small cramped homes where all the conditions are against them, while the facilities and comforts to meet their need are almost at their hand, and all because they are under the stupid belief that the Hospital is the certain way to the cemetery. Not so George. Never did patient lay himself upon his bed with a more buoyant heart than he. His hope was begotten of the belief that the Hospital treatment was all that was needed to restore him to sound health. Of course, his disease had something to do with this hopefulness. Some ailments, even though the attacks are not serious, have a very depressing effect, and lead the invalids to take the most pessimistic view of themselves. On the other hand, consumptives are proverbially optimistic. Ordinarily,—at all events, until the strength is utterly gone—they are always getting better, or, if weaker to-day, they will be stronger to-morrow ; and the undoubting expectation that they will by-and-bye regain their former health is quite a settled thing with them. Some Christian visitors to the sick I know would, under the idea of “faithfulness,” seek to kill that cheery hope, and, with a view to preparing them for death, urge the sufferers to keep the inevitable ever before them. Not I. Innumerable cases within my knowledge have shown me that the brightest expectation of recovery and most earnest desire to live are thoroughly compatible with an intelligent, simple, earnest, Christian faith and joyous

hope in the life beyond. And in instances in which that faith and hope are wanting the sufferers are more likely to be drawn by the Saviour's loving manifestations to appropriating, confiding faith in him than be driven to him by distracting death-terror. Besides, cases differ, and especially young persons, full of life's hopes, require to be dealt with by ministrants judiciously, thoughtfully, tactfully. When I met George the cases of two young men, between whom more than a year intervened—one a consumptive, the other suffering from injury caused accidentally—were fresh in my mind—painfully so. In neither was there hope of recovery, but there was every reason to believe they would live—the one for months, the other for at least a good many weeks. But their friends, anxious about them spiritually, and that they should betimes prepare for the great change, desired that the fact that death would claim them should be broken to them. This was done badly, and the result was grievous. Each "took death to himself," and each died within 60 hours in mental condition that made hope and trust in the Divine love and mercy impossible. Who can tell but that if a more judicious and patientful and less terrorising method had been adopted the rightly-desired end might have been gained, to the infinite satisfaction of all concerned? These and other instances of various kinds have made me more than once seriously ponder the Great Teacher's injunction to all who teach in His name, to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" as well as "faithful."

Not only George Gordon's winningness, but his sad

circumstances as a stranger in a strange land, and the fact that he had for his health's sake—vainly, as I believed—crossed the intervening 16,000 miles of seas, drew my heart to him, and he readily took to me. He made me his confidant, told me all his story—a very simple though sorrowful one,—and explained his purposes and hopes. He came from a large town in the Lowlands of Scotland, where his father had been a merchant in good position. Then was the time of the crash of Scottish banks, which resulted in the ruin of so many families. Mr Gordon was involved in the wreck, his all was swallowed up, and being of a delicate constitution, thus broken in circumstances and in spirit and in heart, he died. Happily, his widow had a small private income of her own, which served to keep the wolf from the door and to enable her, though in a humbler way than she had been accustomed to, to provide for and educate her two boys and two girls. George was the eldest. When well on in his teens he was started in life by an appointment in a mercantile house. It was from the first his ambitious purpose to thoroughly qualify himself for the line of life his father had followed, to re-establish his father's business, and to win back to the family the position they had lost; but ere that could be attained he had before him years of growth and of persevering labour. To that end he worked hard and studied into the late hours; and to avoid expense he helped his brother and sisters in their studies. He was not robust, and the continued strain told upon him, disquieting symptoms manifested themselves, they increased in spite

of all expedients to check them, and he became invalided. As usual in such cases, change of air was proposed, and with a view to his escape from the rigour of the Scottish winter a voyage to the antipodes was advised by his doctor and friends. He was his mother's stay and prop, and for a time she shrank from so extreme a course; but at length yielded to persuasion. By mortgaging part of her income and by other sacrifices the necessary wherewithal was made up, and George sailed for the Britain of the South amid his mother's mingled hopes and fears and his own jubilant anticipations of his return, as a strong man, to enter with undoubted success upon the career he had drawn out for himself. The effect of the voyage out was good, and so also of the first months of his life in the colony. A letter of introduction to a gentleman in a distant part of the province had led him thither, and there he found employment in an office. Then broken weather set in, he caught cold, and his former trouble was revived. Counselling to consult a city doctor, he made for Dunedin, was advised to go into the Hospital, and upon the doctor's recommendation he was admitted.

Such in brief was his story. He was by no means downhearted. The thought of his disease proving fatal never suggested itself to him. His perfect recovery at no distant date was a foregone conclusion. But a change had come over the spirit of his dream. He had been informed about and seen and conversed with others who had exchanged their struggling life in the Homeland for one of comparative ease and plenty in the

colony—who by plodding industry and by making the most of their opportunities had established themselves in positions of comfort. Why not he? There was, however, no selfishness in his aspirations. To make a home for his mother and brother and sisters—to that end would he devote himself. While laid upon his bed he would indulge in day-dreams, and with boyish simplicity and candour, and at the same time with shy facial expression as if he feared I would deem him silly, he would detail his bright schemes—his castles in the air. At such times I felt that a shattering dynamite disclosure from me of the vanity of his hopes and plans would have been cruel.

From the first George manifested reverence for sacred things, in the knowledge of which he had clearly been trained, and in relation to which he freely and with pleasure conversed. But there was no real personal application of the Gospel verities, and a sense of personal interest and depth of feeling were wanting. An upright, honest fellow, with high aspirations and honourable promptings, the thought of the time when, with health restored, he would devote his energies to the making of a home in the colony for those dear to him filled him to the exclusion of everything else. That was the sun in his heaven of hope, and to him it shone brightly. Ere long, however, he gave evidence of deep seriousness of spirit. That mysterious Something in the experience of men and women—that unseen Power which, like the wind, is untraceable by the eye of man, as the Lord told his timid, midnight inquirer, but whose potent influence

changes the current of the human soul and the human destiny, had come to George. Now the Saviour's life and work and sayings became subjects of intense interest to him, and an observer could see that he pondered much over what he read. Like the Psalmist, he meditated upon his bed in the night watches—and in the lightsome hours of the day as well. Once when I was speaking about the Saviour's work and sympathy, and the happiness and strength acceptance of His words gives to the heart, he said with a smile, "That's just how my mother used to speak to me." And then, with his large eyes looking into space, he exclaimed in low tone, "Ay—my good mother ! my—good—mother !" And I saw that he was away in spirit in his far-off home, living his life over again with the mother he loved so dearly. In this, the extreme end of the earth, his mother's influence overshadowed him, held him in its grip, and told ennoblingly upon him. And when, shortly afterwards, in prayer with him, I pleaded that God, if it were the Divine will, would by His blessing on the means used restore him to the state of health that would qualify him for the work he had set his heart upon, he feelingly whispered the response, "Yes !" and when I added an appeal for grace to enable him to fully acquiesce if it was God's will he should not recover he again—but with greater emphasis—whisperingly responded, "Yes ; that's it !"

When early in the afternoon the sun had so far westerned as to cast its rays on the front of the Hospital and into the front wards George would be allowed to rise for a short time to walk the floor or seat himself in some

sheltered nook outside. But that only served to break the monotony. His disease progressed, he became weaker and more emaciated, his cough lost its shortness and deepened, and the exhausting perspiration increased. But even then, during periods of comparative restfulness, his work on behalf of his far-distant loved ones when he was again upon his feet and strong bulked largely in his eye, and he still indulged in the glowing picture of his own drawing of the comfortable home in this new land, in which, through him, he and they would spend years of happiness. But now and then I dropped seemingly casual remarks that tended in an unrepellent way to sheet home to him the fact of his waning condition. One day, after I had in prayer expressed the wish that there might be given him a large foretaste of the joys that awaited him in the better home, he thoughtfully said the conviction was growing upon him that he would not recover—that, after all, he feared death was in his cup. As he spoke he fixed his far-away eyes searchingly upon me as if he hoped my answer would be an assurance that there was yet room for hope that he would regain his health and be able to accomplish his cherished purpose. I did not reply, but he read my answer in my silence and in my face. That was enough. His growing conviction was confirmed. Placing a hand over his eyes he gently sobbed and murmured, "My poor, poor mother!" while the tears trickled down his wan cheeks and through between his fingers. Then reviving himself with surprising composure and vigour, and with a gleam overspreading his wasted features that bespoke something

not of the earth, he exclaimed, "Ah, well; I am in His hands. He knows best. 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.'" And his face and eyes denoted his possession of the "perfect peace" even while sorrow and disappointment surged around his heart and death shadowed him.

One morning, between the small hours, I was called out of bed by a messenger from the Hospital. A spasm had passed over George and he desired to see me. In a few minutes I was beside him. He was propped up, but could not speak, and was not in a condition to be spoken to. Heavy attacks of coughing racked him, and the perspiration gathered in large beads upon his forehead. For fully an hour he held my hand, and now and then turned a trustful, smiling look upon me. Becoming easier, he fell into quiet slumber, and I slipped away. During the next three or four days his condition was variable, but he steadily sank. A few nights later I was again summoned to his bedside. As usual at that late hour—or, rather, early hour of the morning—the one gas burner over the fireplace kept alight was turned down. A burning candle in the hand of the night male nurse cast its dim gleam on the dying bed. The ward was hushed in silence, save that the audible breathing of one or two sleepers was heard. The waking patients looked on the scene with solemn interest. George received me with a smile and a light pressure of the hand. He was in the last stage of weakness, the perspiration burst heavily upon his face, and his breathing was short and laboured,

but the cough was stilled. Clearly the end was at hand. He beckoned, and I bent near to him and heard him whisper, "I'm going—happy!" In compliance with his indicated wish, I put my right arm across the pillows under him, and his head rested near my shoulder. With his eyes bent on my face he several times essayed to speak. At last, with difficulty and long pauses between the words, he said, "I've lost the prize I sought for,—but gained the prize—I—did not seek. Tell my mother. Tell her I have lost the prize of long life—I—came here to win—and gained the prize—of—the greater life—I—did not seek for." A longer pause ensued, while he strove to gather breath. Turning his eyes and pointing with his finger upwards he resumed brokenly, "Tell my mother—meet—there——Home there." He struggled hard to say more, and, still pointing upwards, again uttered the word "prize," and his final breathing closed with the name "Jesus," which had of late been repeatedly on his lips. A qualm passed over his face, his eyes dropped, and his hand fell. Then the distressful facial expression changed to one of profound peacefulness and of rest in sleep. After a few minutes' hush—a silence felt throughout the big ward—the nurse gently eased up the shoulders of the prostrate form, and I withdrew my arm. The prize sought for was lost.

I wrote to Mrs Gordon during George's illness and after his death. Very pathetic were her replies. Of course her grief was deep, her disappointment great. But above the wreck of her earthly hopes there arose in her heart a bright, glowing hope, and a joy above her

immeasurable sorrow—hope and joy based upon her boy's message from the borderland. And, as she told me, in her Gethsemane there came to her heart and life the peace and strength that flow from the child resignation which says, "Not my will, O my Father ; but Thy will be done !"

An unpretentious headstone, erected by his mother's wish and at her cost, marks the resting place of the mortal frame ; but George himself—in the "home—there"—is in happy possession of the prize he gained.



THE SLEEPING SINGER.

Of interesting hospital cases which have come under my notice that of good Robert Bent stands out distinctly. But in one respect it is somewhat harrowing. Although many years have gone by I have still a shuddering remembrance of our first meeting. One day a little man without coat or hat on entered what was then No. 2 ward as I was leaving it, after I had gone the round of the beds. Seeing he was a new patient I spoke, and gave him my hand, which he grasped warmly; but by way of reply he only smiled and nodded and—projected his tongue. In ordinary circumstances that would, of course, be an ungraceful act, but I quite understood him to mean that he was unable to respond to my salutation by word of mouth. The appearance of the tongue was far from pleasant, and it at once showed he was a victim to that fell disease, cancer. In the operating room he had just undergone an examination, and was returning from it when we met. He was below the average height and of spare build, had a very kindly, winning face, and was apparently between 40 and 50 years of age. During the two weeks or so he was in the Hospital I spoke to him repeatedly, and he always listened with evident appreciation and a happy smile. The speaking, however,

was almost wholly on my side, because he could not articulate distinctly, and any attempt caused him pain. Gospel allusions manifestly gave him pleasure, and he indicated his satisfaction by smilingly nodding approval. Not being confined to his bed, he was able to attend the chapel service three times, and on each occasion he evinced marked interest.

If Hospital patients, abed or on their feet, are free from pain, or have not much pain, they can make the time comparatively lightsome by reading ; but in cases in which there is severe and incessant suffering the time hangs heavily, because the sufferer cannot give to reading the mental application it requires. This latter was Robert's condition. He could not settle himself to read for any length of time, and being unable to freely converse with others he gave himself such relief as he could obtain from frequent change of position—now reclining on his bed (on top of the blanket, a practice not now allowed), and anon walking the floor of the ward. I was very much surprised one day to hear him humming a tune while he slowly paced the floor. It naturally gave me the impression that either he did not suffer much pain or was ignorant of his desperate condition. Drawing nearer, I recognised the tune as that of a Gospel hymn. The plaintive sound, yet happy tone, very strongly bespoke the perfect peace of the man whose mind is stayed on God, and it contrasted strikingly with the unrest and complaining spirit sometimes displayed by persons far less afflicted. I am bound to say, however, that among Hospital patients instances of discon-

tent and bitterness are by no means common. Beyond all questions, poor Robert's peace was due to the influence of what some Freethinkers foolishly, not to say impiously, call "the religion of inhumanity!" And such happy experience as he evinced goes to show that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation from the breaking and embittering tendency of affliction as well as from the spiritual evils the Gospel meets.

But I was still more astonished when, later on, I observed that the humming of sacred airs was his almost constant habit not only in his waking hours, but, strange to say, also when asleep. When walking the floor, which he did slowly, he kept time to the tune by gently moving his arms and regulating his steps, only the sound of his voice being heard. When asleep, however—probably because the weary, aching pain was subdued by drugs—his articulation was usually more distinct; and when, during the night, his plaintive humming broke upon the silence of the large ward patients who were awake would listen with mingled feelings of wonder, pity, and pleasure. Several spoke to me of it, and one man did so with tears in his eyes. I had, indeed, reason to believe that the sweet humming of the sleeping sufferer in the dark and still hour, coupled with the sacredness of the words, soothed the hearts of some and awakened serious thoughts in others.

In due time an operation was performed, and with only a small portion of the member left Robert was placed upon his bed in a state of unconsciousness. But the operation was a forlorn hope. Yet, although it was

feared the dreadful and treacherous disease would again manifest itself sooner or later and prove fatal, no one thought the final event would be of such a sudden and tragic nature. That night, after the effects of the chloroform had somewhat worn off, and while quietly sleeping, he was seized with hemorrhage from the diseased part. As a matter of course, prompt efforts were made to check the flow, but unavailing, and good Robert Bent's spirit passed from its mortal tabernacle. Perhaps it was well his end came thus suddenly, and that his final struggle was so brief. God knows best. With the prayer, "From sudden death, good Lord, deliver us," I have not full sympathy. It may or may not be an evil to be dreaded. In Robert's case, if some roots of the cancer remained—and from the character of the disease it is more than probable they were not all eradicated—then but for his sudden demise his sufferings would have been severe and protracted. Looked at in this light, it was a special favour; and God mercifully raised him at once from out his painful experience in an hospital for the sick and suffering to the rest of His eternal home, there, without let or hindrance and without pain, to lift up his voice in praise.

“THAT POUND.”

There is abundant justification for the unpleasant belief that much of the assistance given in charity is abused, or that at best it only meets present need. Unfortunates whose adverse circumstances are such that they are really blameless for their ever “present need” call for still larger sympathy, but the all-too-common, shiftless, unprincipled, and indolent, upon whom all help is literally thrown away, only exasperate, and are a weariness to the flesh. You give to one man or woman, not to speak of a good deal of labour on his or her behalf, and are made to wish you had rather cast the money into the depths of the sea. You give to another, and there comes to your heart a rich return of lasting satisfaction, and the sweet consciousness that in that particular at least you lived that day to purpose. Occasional instances show that through judicious action and energy aid given to some stranded souls results in their permanent advantage. The following is an illustrative case, and most creditable it is to the man concerned. Between it and other instances of a like nature I can speak of there is this difference—that whereas the subject of this sketch began life anew with a mere trifle, the others, when disabled for the work they had previ-

ously earned their livelihood by, were each put in possession of much larger means. In one respect, however, they were alike satisfactory in that all became established in businesses that made them independent of charitable support. And yet I must regretfully qualify that announcement, for one of them made a miserable failure of himself and of his business after all. By years of steady application he multiplied the stock he was started with a hundredfold twice and thrice told and more, and transformed for the better the circumstances of his family. But a skeleton got into his cupboard. He fell into loose, intemperate ways and lost all, and so his last state was worse than his first. Edward Nelson's case was the very antipodes of that man's.

During the colony's coaching days I happened to pass through an Otago township a good many miles distant from Dunedin, and when the usual halt was there made for change of horses I dropped to the ground to ease my cramped limbs. The country was new to me, and I therefore looked around with interest, first in one direction and then in another; and as I did so I was aware that a man in his shirt sleeves, and with white apron in front and calico cap on his head, was standing close by; but it was only after he had repeatedly placed himself in front of me as I again and again changed my position that I was led to look at him and to recognise in him an old Hospital friend. A mutually warm greeting ensued, and the explanation he gave caused me to thank God and take courage.

Edward Nelson's experience shows what a man of

principle, independent spirit, self-denial, and forethought may accomplish when he "purposes in his heart" as to his life's advantages, as did the young Hebrew captive in sacred story. I met Edward in the Hospital seven or eight months after his arrival from the Homeland. He suffered from lung inflammation, had reached middle life, and had a deal of child-like simplicity about him. A few weeks' medical treatment brought him round, and he was again face to face with work-a-day life. Hopefulness was his most marked characteristic, but not the Micawber-like optimism that ever slothfully looks for something to turn up. Though penniless and without kith or kin in the colony, he cheerily believed that, with all possible difficulties and hardships, his bread would, in the Providence of God, be sure, but not the bread of charity. His intention was, as soon as he could accomplish it, to give up the makeshift, uncertain mode of life to which he had so far been compelled—navvying, ditching, and such like—and to begin somewhere in his own line of business—that of barber. As upon his discharge from the Hospital he wished to get away from Dunedin I gave him £1 to help him along. But there was no Aid Society in those days, and I had no funds other than my own to draw upon. With warm expressions of thankfulness he then went his way, and with his disappearance he passed from my memory.

Within a year I had occasion, as I have said, to pass through the township I have referred to, and, as already stated, Edward forced himself on my attention when he was so far from my thoughts as the poles

asunder. After a few words of kindly inquiry on both sides I went with him to his "place of business" on the opposite side of the street, from which he had espied me. It consisted of a "but and a ben"—a front shop and a back room,—contained very little furniture or stock, and what there was was very plain and simple. A small table, a sofa (which also served as his bed), a small looking-glass, some barber's utensils, a kettle and a teapot, and one or two other articles comprised the lot.

He then related his interesting story. After he had received the pound, and when on his way to the coach office in Dunedin to take out his passage, he opportunely met a carrier he was slightly acquainted with, and who was just then starting up-country. Edward informed his friend of his illness and of his purpose, and the teamster thereupon generously offered him a gratuitous "lift." Then a bright thought suggested itself to him, and he struck while the iron was hot—and struck well. Now that fortune was smiling upon him, and with a whole pound sterling (!) to work upon, he conceived the idea of at once carrying out his project to establish himself in his own line. It was a venture, but he was hopeful that other circumstances would favour him. In compliance with his request the carrier halted for a short time, and in the interval Edward purchased a couple of razors, a soap box and lather brush, a tin billy, a couple of towels, and one or two other small necessary articles. Equipped with this stock-in-trade, he in due time arrived at the township he had fixed upon, and where he knew he would

have no professional rival. Without delay he looked about for suitable quarters, and came upon the shop (then and for a long time previously unoccupied) to which he led me. Promptly hiring it for 5s per week, and helped by his landlord with the loan of a table and a chair, he forthwith commenced business. There he also kept "bachelor's hall," and by steady application to his work and rigid frugality he was soon enabled to provide himself with other household articles. But prior to the acquisition of the sofa he satisfied himself with the very poor man's "down" bed—a bed on the floor! He was contented and happy, declared he was prospering, and added, while he gleefully rubbed his hands, "And it's all through that pound and God's blessing upon it." I need scarcely say that in its cheering effect that one successful case (exceptionally successful, I may say) went far to counterbalance the disheartening influence of a hundred disappointing ones.

But that was not the last of Edward and "that pound." Three years rolled by, duty again called me in Edward's direction, and I availed myself of the opportunity to again visit my friend. The fresh-painted shop front, the name in full above the door, and the orthodox barber's pole all evidenced that he was still prospering, and the contents of the shop showed he had considerably enlarged his business and increased his worldly gear. To his business as hairdresser he had added on a limited scale the dual one of tobacconist and toy dealer; two placards in the window also notified that he was the local agent for Dunedin and one or two up-country

newspapers, and a permanent counter had taken the place of the borrowed table. The appearance of the little back room—"the ben"—likewise bespoke progress. It was plainly but comfortably furnished, and could now boast of (among other things) a bed, a carpet, a few pictures on the walls, and a small bookcase with books; and although he still slept on the premises he had his food supplied from a neighbouring restaurant. He was the same hearty, cheery, contented man, was devout in his expressions of thankfulness to God, and, as I learned from his fellow-townsmen, he was esteemed as a man of business and earnest worker in the church he was associated with. As a rule persons assisted when discharged from the institutions do not think of returning the amounts advanced to them, but now and then there are pleasing exceptions, and Edward was one of them. When bidding me good-bye he surprised me by leaving in my hand "something to help some poor fellow from the Hospital to make a fresh start," and said he would never forget the timely aid rendered himself and the benefit he had derived from "that pound."

Again time passed on, several more years flitted by, again I was in Edward's district, and once more I dropped in upon my friend; but as I heard he had been seriously ill with his old lung trouble I so timed myself as to spend a good part of an evening with him. A glance around the shop showed me that since I last stood there amazing progress had been made. He had yet further enlarged his business and increased his stock. He was still the "town barber," but he had also established

himself as a general dealer on a large scale, and it seemed as if he would be able to supply from his multifarious articles of merchandise anything from the proverbial "needle to the anchor." But to my agreeable surprise he had (apart from the advancement betokened by the fulness and cosy snugness of "the ben") also increased his possessions in another important respect, and thereby added materially to his comfort. With great glee he introduced me to the "sharer of his joys and sorrows"—a buxom, plain, but kindly-looking woman, a good few years younger than himself. He was manifestly proud of his wife, she evinced as warm a regard for her "old man," and they were clearly a well-matched and happy couple. No doubt, Edward estimated the worth of his new acquisition as highly as another lady was reckoned by her husband—a "real Mackay," a worthy Otago celebrity in years gone by—who to the amusement of his creditors not only included his "better half" among his assets, but ranked her as by far the most valuable of them all! Though that good "old identity" had not the sufficient wherewithal to free him from his financial difficulties, he had yet something that served to save him from crushing despair—the "saving grace of humour."

At the close of the evening Edward suggested that I should worship with them. I did so, and we both took part. He surprised me. For fervour, deep Christian experience, and lofty spiritual thought his prayer was pleasant to hear. He spoke as a man the leading principles in whose heart are love, gratitude, and child-like

faith in its full assurance ; and I then understood the secret of his marvellous progress since the day he turned in his poverty from the Hospital. The threefold cord—"not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord"—had united his being and put purpose into his life. Hence God had made his way prosperous and given him good success.

Next morning I called to bid Edward and his wife good-bye. He then proceeded to lavish upon me toy presents for my children (then young) until I compelled him to desist ; and as I turned away he crowned these tokens of his gratitude by handing me another substantial "something" to be charitably dispensed, with the remark that "that pound" had placed him under an obligation that he could never repay.



MENTAL ASYLUM REMINISCENCES.

Contradictions and Extremes in the Minds of the Insane.

It is difficult to understand how such contraries can exist in the minds of the insane. But they do, just as in the dreams of the sane the most extreme contraries and impossibilities are incongruously mixed up, and that without causing the slightest surprise to the dreamer. And, indeed, talking of dreams, it is simply the fact that many persons upon recovery from their mental affliction affirm that they just seem to have awakened out of a dream, and that the whole period of their insanity, with all that transpired in its course, is to them just like a dream. As, then, from some cause operating on the brain the most absurd fancies play in the minds of sane persons while dreaming in their sleep, so is it with the insane in their waking hours.

I have met with an unfortunate who believed he had no bones in his body, although he could perfectly well feel them ; with another who averred he had no mouth, while he knew he was continually using that member both in speaking and eating ; with another who wailed that he was dead, and who could not see that the power

to partake of food was in itself proof that he was alive and in the body ; with another who believed he was a spirit, a fairy, and had no body, and who would shrink away in terror when anyone in fun made a show of touching him ; with another—a Scotch woman of very bulky proportions, and certainly not under 15 stone weight—who believed she was “ fa’in’ awa’ tae naething,” and would, if not prevented, have gobbled up food incessantly to keep up her flesh ; with another—a girl of 18 or 19, and a living skeleton—who believed she was becoming excessively stout, and who persistently starved herself to bring her body within reasonable compass (she eventually died) ; with another—a big, bearded man—who, in the belief that he was a woman, and the object of all masculine admiration, stepped and minced and coquetted like a sentimental girl, and was as fond of gaudy feathers and ribbons and trinkets and personal adornments as any frivolous-minded maid could be, and only the lack of opportunities prevented him from substituting full female attire for his own legitimate clothing ; with another who believed he was pining away as the result of poison he imagined was regularly mixed with his food on and on through more than four decades, while he was all the time in robust bodily health ; with another—a woman—who, in the belief she was a horse, put on her head and face stiff material to serve as hood and blinkers, and neighed and emitted the snorting sound peculiar to the horse ; with another—a little man—who, to rebuild the spine he had lost, spent his waking hours, through days, weeks, months, and years, in incessant muscular action

suggestive of the not over pleasant thought that he was the victim of a battalion of creeping things ; and of yet another—emphatically one of Nature's noblemen—who, with anguish distorting his face and his body bent as if he were borne down by a heavy burden, and with both hands joined in front to support the awful weight within him, moaned that he had a whale in his belly ; and so on.

But perhaps the most remarkable and perplexing case I ever came across was that of a young woman who thought she was persistently and systematically starved. She was a long time in the Asylum, and as a matter of course nourishing food was supplied to her regularly, and she as regularly and freely partook of it. Yet her continual sobbing complaint was that she had got no food at all—none that day, nor the previous day, nor during all the previous month, nor since she entered the Asylum. That was the one string upon which she harped ; and the distress she one day, in an exceptionally strange way evinced, showed how completely she was controlled by her delusion, and also how extremes meet among the insane. I came upon her while she had a lump of bread in her hand. She looked at it, handled it, and partook of it with evident relish, and the lump was gradually lessening. But she wept and wailed while she ate and swallowed. This seemed to be a good opportunity to test her, and I put to her the usual round of questions as to whether she had any food that day, or the previous day or week or month or year, and to each and all she gave an emphatic negative. Notwithstanding that it

was pointed out that at the very moment she was biting and chewing and swallowing the bread she wailed and declared she was starved, and re-asserted that she had got no food during all the time she was in the institution. Had she been, like a good many of her fellow-patients, a pawky creature with some fun in her, and with sense enough to deliberately befool those around her, there might have been some suspicion as to her sincerity and the genuineness of her sorrow. But her case was one that could not admit of doubt. She was beyond the pawky stage, and too far gone to be capable of practising deceit. At the same time, while I speak of the "genuineness of her sorrow," it is certain she did not experience distress in the proper sense of the word. As a matter of fact her distress was no deeper and no more injurious than that of a pettish, blubbering child. But it was genuine—that is, not mere pretence.



PATRICK HERRICK AND HIS BITING MODE OF DEFENCE.

“The horrors of a lunatic asylum!” The representation implied in the words is only too fairly descriptive of the condition of asylums for the mentally deranged in the Old Country long ago. But coming, as they did, from the Bench of the Dunedin Police Court, they have a strange sound. An insane man was brought before the court with a view to the poor fellow’s safe keeping and proper treatment in the place provided for such as he. The then magistrate frowned, and said he was strongly averse to committing anyone to “the horrors of a lunatic asylum.” Needless to say, he spoke out of ignorant prejudice, and, like all who express themselves strongly on what they don’t know, he spoke foolishly. The late Mr Carew, who had personal knowledge of the institution, would not have given utterance to such a sentiment, and neither would the court authorities who have succeeded that gentleman of revered memory. It is not difficult—or should not be—to determine which is the more horrible—the mental hospital, with its full and proper provision for the needs of the class it is designed for, its systematic treatment, its guardianship, which allows for a large amount of free and safe action and for con-

tinuous lightsome changes that ensure cheerfulness, as opposed to dull and depressing monotony; or the wretchedness and lack of facilities and harsh and improper treatment that in many instances obtain in cramped houses, where in the nature of things everything tends to make the condition of the hapless sufferers more miserable and hopeless. Besides, there are the homeless and friendless ones who go wrong mentally, and between their wandering and unprotected and unprovided-for condition and the asylum, with its expert supervision and facilities for medical treatment and shelter there can be no comparison. It can be readily understood that while the asylum is really as much a home as such places can be, where everything possible is done for the welfare of the unfortunate people on whose account it exists, there are always among the inmates men and women who fret under the restraint, and long for freedom, albeit that they are no more capable of using their freedom aright than are children—many of them, indeed, less so—because of their strange and dangerous controlling mental bent. But few outsiders would think it possible that patients would upon their discharge evince great unwillingness to leave. Yet so it is, and instances in which men, weeping like boys, have gone from the building and grounds with laggard step, and returned a few days afterwards begging to be readmitted, come to my recollection.

The case of Patrick Herrick is to the point, and it is a touching one, though, like many others, it is not without its humorous side. Patrick's very distinct

brogue unmistakably settled the question of his nationality. He did not need to say in so many words that he hailed from the Emerald Isle. "Me name it is Patrick Herrick, sorr," proclaimed that he was an "Oirishman indade." He was a large man every way—all round and up and down—though not corpulent; and when I first met him he had reached middle life. The impression he gave others and myself was that he was constitutionally lazy—that he had been "born tired." A big, hulking fellow, he evinced disinclination to even the slightest exertion, and had no higher ambition than to be allowed to loaf and loll idly on a form or on the ground. Whatever he was before he set foot in the colony, he was decidedly an "undesirable immigrant." However he conducted himself on board ship, the fact that immediately on his arrival in a northern part of New Zealand he gave disquieting indications justifies the belief that, like many another hapless soul, he had been cruelly shipped away from the Home Country solely because he was mentally queer, and therefore a burden to be got rid of. The name of the mental incapables who in the early and palmy days, and later on, when the great immigration scheme was in full swing, were dumped into the colony from the Homeland is legion. Almost every ship brought one or more, male and female; and as there was no preventive law, as at present, those of them who were brought to the Port of Otago (Port Chalmers) were usually transferred direct from the vessel to the Dunedin Asylum, there to remain till death. Numbers of the poor creatures lingered on through years, some through

several decades. Pat was one of the undesirables. His insanity was pronounced, and took the serious and not uncommon form of suspicion of his fellows, who, he incessantly complained, were a "trouble" to him. He was the object of conspiracy, and on all hands people were plotting to injure or kill him. That was his main delusion. After causing a good deal of annoyance and anxiety he at length brought matters to a climax by attempting to throw himself from a high window to escape death at the hands of the conspirators; and he was forthwith put in safe keeping in the Asylum.

His residence there extended over several years. Latterly, however, he gradually improved; but an injury through accident to one of his legs disqualified him for manual labour. As owing to his improved mental condition he could not be retained in the Asylum, and yet on account of his lameness and homelessness could not be turned adrift on the world, he was passed over to my care with a view to his location in the Old Men's Home at Caversham; and, pending the necessary arrangements, I placed him in a restaurant in the city. For the first two or three days he behaved rightly enough, but one morning an urgent message summoned me to the restaurant. His insanity had returned. The change from the Asylum into the outer world had acted injuriously upon him, and he was again in terror of his fellows. I then learned that on the previous night—or, rather, in the small hours of the morning—when all the inmates were asleep and the house hushed in silence a tremendous shrieking and sound of

scuffling, as of men in conflict, came from one room. All in the place were quickly astir, a rush was made for the apartment, and on the door being forced open an extraordinary scene met the eyes of the onlookers. There on the floor was big Pat, fully dressed and with his heavy boots on, and a lodger in his cutty sark and with bare legs, and the two were strangely linked together, the connection being formed by the union of Pat's teeth and the other man's left ear, to which Pat held on with the grip of a vice. The owner of the ear kept on shrieking, "Let go-o-o ! Let go-o-o !" while Pat, in muffled, guttural tone, growled savagely through his teeth, "Will ye sthop it, thin? Will ye sthop it, thin?" Happily the madman was induced to release his prisoner, and no serious mischief was done.

The circumstances were extremely comical, though to the assailed man the experience was by no means pleasant and more than a trifle humiliating. It turned out that after having been asleep for some time he was awakened by a sound from beneath. Springing to his feet and striking a light and peering under the bed, he was not a little astonished to see Pat stretched out at full length. On being discovered, the skulker crept out and assumed the perpendicular. The occupant of the room put to him the very proper question, "What are you doing here?" but Pat gave to it a very improper answer indeed. He suddenly and savagely laid hold of the flap of the man's ear with his teeth. In the struggle that ensued the candlestick fell and the light was extinguished, and when the other people of the establish-

ment appeared on the scene with a fresh light they found the two engaged as described. The fact was that for some reason or other Pat looked upon the innocent lodger as his secret enemy, and, apprehensive of foul play, he adopted that not very rational method of "stopping it!"

Of course the Asylum authorities were promptly communicated with, and the turn affairs had taken made known to them ; but before I had time to receive a reply Pat caused still more concern. A second message from the restaurant informed me that he had disappeared. Seeing he was physically as well as mentally incapable, this was alarming. As for two days no trace of him could be found, it was feared he had made away with himself, and the thoughts of one and another tended in the direction of the bay. On the third day, however, all anxiety was allayed by a wire from Seacliff announcing that he had just put in an appearance there. When, in response to loud and peremptory knocking, the officer in charge unlocked the door of the upper building, where for years Pat had been housed, he was amazed to see his former patient, and the other Asylum folk were greatly surprised when the poor man, utterly fagged out and travel-stained, "hirpled" into his old quarters. Then with deliberate manner he sat down among his old mates and emphatically declared that he had come to stay, and that no power on earth would make him "lave." Mindful of his comfortable life in the Asylum, he had in his lameness crawled and struggled over 24 miles of rough road, up hill and down dale, between Dunedin and Seacliff, resting frequently, sleeping under hedges,

and getting a bite of food here and there as he hobbled along. When confronted with the Medical Superintendent he made a most piteous appeal. "I'll not be a bother to yez, sorr, and so I won't," he said. "I'll slape in the bush, and so I will, if ye'll only let me come in av an evening to have a bit game at euchre wid Tim Hurley!" Tim, also a real son of green Erin, was an inmate. Between him and Pat a brotherly feeling subsisted, and the two had spent much of their time together.

Pat was allowed to remain for a period, but as he gave no further evidence of insanity he was not booked as a patient. His final removal from the Asylum therefore became necessary, and in due course, but much against his will, he was conveyed to the Old Men's Home. There he conducted himself quietly, though not in reconciled spirit; but his life in it was of short duration. His old brain malady had, no doubt, something to do with what followed. Instead of manifesting itself in morbid hallucinations it resulted in the failure of his health and eyesight. He became stone blind, his strength gradually gave way, and he was, without any weary hirpling over miles of rough road, freed from his earthly "troubles" by peacefully entering the bourne where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

THE KISS OF CHARITY, AND DOING THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST.

“Poor, poor fellow!” This has been the almost invariable sympathetic response to the verbal relation of this short history, and it will doubtless be re-echoed by all who peruse the printed narrative.

He was a minister of the Gospel, of which denomination need not be stated.

Sometimes there is little or no moral change in unfortunates who pass from a sane to an insane condition. What they were when in full possession of their mental powers, so in the main are they when the mental balance is lost. In some the former amiable and moral traits continue; in others there is a continuance of the old evil characteristics—with this difference, that in the latter the evil is usually intensified. But insanity often results in an entire change in the nature of its victim. In many instances men and women noted for amiability and graceful manners become sour-tempered, vicious, and brutally rude; while others respected for the goodness and purity of their lives fall to a low moral level, and with amazing glibness give utterance to words and sentiments that formerly they would have shuddered even to think of. In all such the face changes for the

worse in proportion as the disposition does, and when there is recovery the improvement becomes pleasingly manifest alike in feature and conduct. People are, of course, whether sane or insane, judged by the manifestations they give—in features and in language and in conduct. I can think of persons of whom, when brought to the Asylum, a bad opinion was formed, because of their unloveable ways and utterances, but upon mental recovery the change in their appearance and action and language was wonderful. While in their insanity they were repulsive, in their sane state they were estimable and winning. This suggests the thought of a double nature, and shows that as the reason fails the animal nature ascends, and as reason gains the ascendancy the animal nature subsides.

The idea that the higher and lower natures are comprised in the human being is strikingly illustrated by Stevenson in his fanciful and interesting, but dreadful, story of "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde." Dr Jekyll, the scientific professor, of estimable character, comely appearance, and pleasing manners, respected by all who knew him, and Mr Hyde, the shrunken creature, ugly and hateful in disposition as in the outer man, are one and the same. The transforming drug, according to Stevenson, revealed the double nature in the one man. So with like effect the mental condition operates on poor mortals.

Of this double nature the Rev. Harold Norton was a living example. I did not know him before his intellect lost its balance. When I met him he was under the watchful care of friends. His age was slightly over 30 ;

he was of average height and build, was wiry and strong, and exceedingly active and lithe, had jet-black hair, dark, piercing eyes, and a sharp countenance. His appearance and general demeanour betokened him an educated and accomplished gentleman, and in his better moods he was a good, kindly, agreeable man and warm-hearted friend. It goes without saying that he was of a highly nervous temperament. He was, in fact, a bundle of nerves. His eccentricities were first observable while he was an assistant to an aged and respected minister in a provincial town, and he was an earnest and zealous worker. As usual in such cases, he first gave indications of peculiarities of a mixed sort, and these gradually became more pronounced, until, by a queer freak in the pulpit one Sabbath day, he made it only too certain that his intellect had become seriously unhinged. While reading, as part of the service, the fifth chapter of the first epistle of Peter he in due course reached the concluding verse—"Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity." He paused, and for a moment gazed fixedly on the passage as if his attention had been suddenly arrested, then he looked dreamily into vacancy, and, as if giving himself time to take in their full meaning, he repeated in slow and measured tone the words, "Greet—ye—one—another—with—a—kiss—of—charity!" Turning his eyes flashingly upon the people, and with nervous twitching of body and face that seemed to indicate that a new light had dawned upon him, and with uplifted hand, he vehemently exclaimed, "This is an apostolic injunction. It is a plain duty laid upon us, and one that we have

hitherto neglected. We must neglect it no longer, and we will begin by obeying it—NOW!" Suiting the action to the word, he jerked himself from the pulpit and down the steps, and to the amazement of all, the grief of the sober-minded, the amusement of the less decorous, and the alarm of the young women, he proceeded to give practical obedience to the "apostolic injunction." The effect of the explosion can easily be imagined.

It is usual for the insane to be completely in the grasp of one ruling idea. In some instances it continues through long years to life's close, but in others it holds only for a time, and is followed by another, which in its turn gives place to a third, and that to a fourth, and so on to the end; but, whether it is short-lived or continuous, the one idea for the time being dominates the unfortunate it has gripped. In Mr Norton's case the idea of the kiss of charity had its comparatively short day, but it was all-prevailing while it held him. It was the one duty he was moved to; and most absurdly, in houses or in open street or road, he discharged the obligation laid upon him by Scripture authority, to the consternation of old and young, male and female, intimates and strangers, whom he unceremoniously greeted with the "kiss of charity." He was also amazingly fussy in rendering services—or what he meant to be services—whether or not his help was required or would be appreciated, or would serve any purpose. Thus, while crossing a bridge he came upon a nurse-girl in charge of a baby in a perambulator. To the girl's wonderment and alarm he snatched the little carriage from her hand and

wheeled it to the end of the bridge, and then, to the greater astonishment of the lassie, he administered to her the "kiss of charity." That done, the innocent-minded fellow passed on his way with the comforting feeling that he had discharged his duty !

But that "apostolic injunction" passed from his mind and another succeeded it. This time it was St. Paul's direction to Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist." An earnest minister when in mental health, he became more so in his deranged condition. His zeal, however, wofully outran his discretion, and, save when his mind was in a more settled state, he lost the art of being wise as the serpent and harmless as the dove. He forgot the plain Scripture rule that "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." In his ardent purpose to "do the work of an evangelist" and convert people he showed, like Mohammed, a determination to resort to any means, mild or strong, fair or foul—moral suasion in the first instance, but if that failed then his strong right arm, or, still worse, a walking stick or even a poker.

After he had in his mad zeal given a deal of bother to one and another things were brought to a climax one night by a very "striking" incident. During the day he had darted from house to house, in his rough and energetic way, "doing the work of an evangelist," and at a late hour he called upon a member of the church who had some slight illness. To get rid of his unreasonable visitor the sick man told him he need not remain nor

repeat his call, as he wished to be attended only by the senior pastor. Not perceiving the snub, and taking no offence, Norton at once hurried off to the house of the old minister, then snugly in bed. Informed that his assitant wished to see him on urgent business, the old gentleman rose, partially dressed himself, and entered the room which Norton was pacing with nervous stride. "Mr—— is ill and wishes to see you," said the enthusiast. The senior minister, who had that very day visited the church member, took in the situation, and blandly said he would call early next morning. "Oh, that won't do," exclaimed the junior; "you must go NOW." The old gentleman again demurred. "Will you go NOW?" fiercely demanded Norton, scowlingly, bringing his face close to the aged man's, who in his impatience sharply responded "I won't." "Then take that," said Norton, the "that" being a violent dig with his right knee in the pit of the old man's stomach, and next moment the latter was on his back on the floor. Rising, sore and angry, he ordered his assailant to leave the house. "Will you go now to see Mr——?" again demanded the persistent Norton. "I shall not," replied the other. "Then take that and that," hissed Norton, the "that" this time being the smashing with his fist of two large window panes. Having thus delivered his soul, he rushed out into the street with cut and bleeding hand.

Mr Norton's condition now made immediate restrictive measures imperative. In the hope that a change of scene and air and rest would bring him round he was placed in the care of friends in a fine, cheery, bracing

district, and it was there I became acquainted with him. As I have said, he varied mentally, like many similarly afflicted ones, and when able to comport himself with discretion, as he did at this particular time, his good qualities were made manifest, and he proved himself an agreeable companion and pleasant, instructive conversationalist. Modest, earnest, tactful, it gave him joy to be spiritually and temporally helpful to people in distressful circumstances, and in his efforts to be of service he did not spare himself. But he again got out of the traces. "Doing the work of an evangelist" was still the one idea that swayed him. In his zeal he entered the houses of people, whether he knew them or not, and insisted upon vigorously converting them right off. One incident was startling, though in the literal sense it was not a "striking" one. Provoked by Norton's obtrusiveness, wearied with his persistency, and to get rid of him, an old man said "Oh, give your attention to someone else, and don't concern yourself about me. I am not of your sort. I am an unbeliever." It was an unfortunate remark, and its effect upon Norton was the reverse of what the speaker intended and expected. "An unbeliever, are you?" shrieked Norton, springing to his feet. Seizing the poker and placing himself in position as if to bring the weapon crushingly upon the old man's head, he exclaimed, "I'll kill you then !" Scared, but looking the madman in the eye, the threatened one calmly asked, "And suppose you kill me, what good will that do you?" Happily the paroxysm passed off, and staring wildly at the "unbeliever" Norton replaced the iron on the fender

and walked away. It was a close shave. On the back of this a more blood-curdling break brought the ultra-zealous man to the end of the tether of freedom, and none too soon. With razor in hand he was one day found slowly, and as if scientifically, cutting, slit by slit, the throat of a bedridden octogenarian, who through senile decay was helpless to defend himself or even to know what was being done to him. A ringing blow from a younger man who opportunely came upon the scene floored Norton. A few days later he was in safe keeping at Seacliff.

In the Asylum he was a decidedly interesting patient. Of bright intellect, cultured, thoughtful, and well read, he was superior to the general run of the inmates, and in his better and quieter moods conversation with him was a real pleasure. But he was exceedingly erratic and unreliable, a moment sufficing to bring about a total change in his spirit and countenance and action. The dreadfully springy knee, the jerky power of which was extraordinary, and told with such effect on the old clergyman, was his abominably aggravating weapon of offence. Against it all had to be on their guard. His face beaming with the sunshine of goodwill, he would step up to his intended victim, and in gushing words express the kindness of his heart, and in a twinkling scowling blackness would take the place of the smiling sunshine, and simultaneously with the facial change, and with the force of a battering ram, the sudden and cruel stroke would be given, generally with the result that his victim would double up with a loud "Oh!" or be laid on his back.

Several were so victimised before the attendants were aware of his treacherous habit.

For my own safety it was ever the custom of the Asylum authorities to inform me of the dangerous tendencies of patients, and I was duly advised of Norton's treacherous mode of assault. But, while always on the watch, I conversed with him freely, attendants being close by to help if need were. On repeated occasions amusement was caused by his persistent and cunning endeavours to get in front of me and by the simple plan I adopted to frustrate him. When I entered his ward it was his wont to make for me with face and manner and words expressive of overflowing friendliness, and ostensibly with the object of breathing out his goodwill, but I was careful to receive him sideways, so that if he did strike the blow would come upon the hard hip-bone. That not being his purpose, he would make a sharp move to get in front, but I as quickly edged round a bit; and these movements being repeated again and again, round and round we would go, making several revolutions, until, tired of the nonsense, I would say, "It's no use, Norton. I know what you want to do, but I won't give you the chance if I can help it." Thus baffled, he would good-humouredly turn away with the remark, "Ah! you are one too many for me."

When in one of his troublesome moods he one day nearly brought his career to an end by a mad action. To prevent him annoying the other patients he was put by himself into an upper room instead of being shut up on the ground floor. There he would have been safe

enough if he had not somehow become possessed of a bit of sharp-edged iron. Undoing the screws of the bars, he leapt from the window—a depth of some 30 feet. The erection of the Asylum building had just been completed, but the paths had not yet been metalled nor the yards asphalted ; and as there had been heavy rain for a week or more the ground was in a spongy state. That saved him, though, in addition to the shock, his right wrist was dislocated. “What made you do that daft-like trick?” I asked him. His brain still wandering, he meaninglessly replied, “Daft-like trick, sir ! You surprise me. Why, don’t you know that God’s ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts?” He soon recovered, but there was no mental improvement, though he continued to have his quiet as well as restless turns.

But the end—the result of another mad leap—was not far off. And this brings my sad story to a close. A member of a well-to-do family in the Mother Country, he was remembered with affectionate solicitude by those to whom he was dear and to whom his mental breakdown was a sore disappointment and grief. By their direction arrangements were made to transfer him to their care, and in the custody of a young man he was borne away on the long and risky voyage of 16,000 miles to his home. I never had the means of knowing how he comported himself on shipboard, but it may be assumed that, when allowed to be out of his cabin, he was deemed to be in a reliable state of mind. The only information which reached me was that, when one day quietly walking on deck, the while pleasantly conversing with a fellow-

passenger, there came upon him one of his sudden lightning-flash impulses. It was his last. A sharp, short run, a spring that carried him clear of the ship's rail, and a dive head foremost into the ocean shimmering in the sunlight, and he was gone ! The usual cries of "Man overboard !" and "Man the lifeboat !" were rung out, the vessel was quickly hove-to, and willing men rushed to the rescue, while numbers of the crew and passengers, with lifebuoys and other floatable articles in hand, anxiously watched for the reappearance of the hapless soul. But they watched in vain. When poor Norton made the fatal plunge the great Pacific opened to receive him, but it also instantly and finally closed over him—to hold him until the day when the sea shall give up its dead.



A SMART BUT CRUEL "RISE."

The smart things said by lunatics who are neither imbeciles nor melancholics are sometimes astonishing, and if the patients are of a sour and sarcastic turn they make themselves very disagreeable. A Seacliff Asylum inmate named J—— F—— is of that stamp. An exceedingly restless man, and possessing a good deal of intelligence and ready wit, he is prone to take smart and smarting "rises" out of his fellows, for however laughable his thrusts may be, they are usually more or less uncomplimentary and stinging. The following incident is an example of this unpleasant characteristic of his, though in this instance he was prompted to it. Life insurance agents frequently visit the Asylum on business intent—that is, to "take the lives" of attendants ;—and one of the fraternity was looked upon by the Asylum folk with great disfavour. He was quite a "toph" in his get-up, his face was the reverse of winning, and he made himself offensive by the superior airs he affected and by his conceited "haw-haw" mode of address. He had, moreover, a very pronounced and repellent squint, and altogether he was not of a type to inspire one with confidence. It so happened that while he and the then chief attendant were confabbing, F—— was close by, and he evidently

did not like the stranger. Standing behind the agent, and with his face towards the chief, he made some dumb show, and by facial and finger signs and the drawing of his hand across his own neck, he flatteringly indicated that in his opinion the "life-taker" was nothing else than a cut-throat. Presently the chief, on humorous mischief bent, took F—— aside and said, "I'll give you a plug of tobacco if you take a 'rise' out of that fellow." As a bit of 'bacca is to Asylum inmates who indulge in the weed what a dram is to a toper or lollies are to children, F—— caught at the offer with alacrity, and, holding out his hand, he said, "Done! Give me the plug." "No, no!" replied the chief. "Do the work and then you'll get the pay." Thereupon F—— stepped up to the stranger with a determined look, and, after eyeing him from head to foot, he exclaimed in a mock tone of recognition, "Oh, I say; you were a soldier, were you not?" Aware that he was accosted by a lunatic, the agent was interested and amused, the idea of being dubbed a military man also pleased him, and he promptly answered "Yes." Then followed a short dialogue, in course of which the interrogated man projected his chest and pridefully stretched himself to his full length. "Yes," said F——, "you were a soldier, and you served through the Crimean campaign?" The agent smilingly nodded in the affirmative. "And you were at the battle of Alma?" continued F——. Another affirmative nod. "And you were at the battle of Inkerman?" Another affirmative inclination of the head. "And you were at the taking of Sebastopol?" "I was," responded the

agent. "And you served in India during the Mutiny?" "Yes." "And you helped to rescue the women and children there?" "Yes." "And you were shot?" This brought a dubious "Eh?" from the man under fire, who was beginning to feel somewhat uncomfortable. "Oh, yes," persisted F——, "you were shot, and" (pointing to the defective visual organ) "the bullet went in THERE. And the blundering doctor who took the eye out to get the bullet put it back THAT way, and that is how you have that precious beauty of a peeper!" Then, turning to the chief, with extended hand, he said, "Now for the plug!" Needless to say, the chief was considerably taken aback. He could not conceive what the string of questions was intended to lead up to, and the explosive conclusion far exceeded the bit of harmless fun he desired and expected. As for the victim of F——'s cunning, his wrathfulness may be imagined, and he was naturally chagrined at being duped into making such a fool of himself. Without loss of time he hastily quitted the Asylum, and he has never again ventured to put in an appearance there to "take lives."



SEEKING FOR HER CHILDREN.

She was one of the finest women I ever met with. Though not aged, she was well on in years, and unmarried. As a wife and a mother she would without doubt have made the domestic circle fragrant with the odour of her excellencies. In build she was tall and slim, her hair dark and intermingled with grey, her eyes thoughtful and dreamy, her face long and pinched, and, while there was nothing in it of what the world calls beauty, its mild, earnest, and saintly expression made it exceptionally attractive. She was highly educated, and had during a great part of her life filled the office of governess to titled and wealthy families. But from the time I met her till her death her mental condition made the use of her accomplishments impossible, although to the last, amid all the eccentricities of her malady, her bearing was that of a high-toned and cultured lady.

Miss Lamont was a native of Scotland, and about two years before her death she came to New Zealand to join her friends—all respected colonists. When she embarked for the colony she was in her usual health, but in course of the voyage her restlessness attracted notice, and in a short time her mental impairment became pronounced. She received all due attention from

the doctor and others, and for a time a close watch over her was maintained, but being found to be perfectly harmless to herself and others, and as it was seen that restraint irritated her, to her still greater mental hurt, towards the end of the voyage she was allowed to roam about freely. She was all activity, lived in the past, and bustled about in imagination tending the children, or earnestly seeking for the children, she had had charge of in the years gone by. She spoke of them as "her children." They formed her one theme, to find them was her one object, and she was oblivious to everything else and heedless of all around her.

But amid all her delusions Miss Lamont lived in a heavenly atmosphere, and manifested remarkable goodness and gentleness of disposition and child-like piety. She was thoroughly conversant with the Scriptures, and showed especial fondness for the metrical Psalms; and when anyone commenced in her hearing to repeat a passage or to sing a Psalm she would instantly, even in her restless moods, take it up and finish it. "Sing the Hundredth Psalm, or the 'Lord's my Shepherd,'" the matron would sometimes say to her. "You begin, ma'am," she would reply. And on a start being made by the matron the "good creature," as she was commonly called, would in a timmer voice take up the Psalm and finish it, her earnest face and the slow and timely movement of her head denoting the devotion with which her soul entered into the spirit of the words.

She seldom conversed with those around her, but while seated beside the fire she spent much of her time

in conversation with unseen persons—"her children" and others of former years,—she herself repeating their replies to her remarks to them; and as the conversation proceeded she every now and then turned her head sideways, as if looking at the person spoken with, and altered her tone as if imitating the person's voice. These conversations showed how devotedly she had discharged her duties, and how she had ever as a Christian woman endeavoured to wield an ennobling influence. She existed in a world of her own, and lived the past over again. These conversations required to be heard to be rightly understood. The following dialogue with a certain Lizzie (presumably an uneducated, aimless housemaid) will so far indicate what I mean: "Lizzie, you should learn to read.—Should you! Certainly you should.—Come up to my room after your work is done and I will help you. You haven't time! Oh, Lizzie, don't say that; you can make time for yourself.—You're tired after your day's work! No doubt you are, my woman; but a little reading will be no great labour, and will do you good.—You don't want to! Oh, Lizzie, don't say that; it's wrong; you should learn; just you come up, my good lassie, and bring your book with you.—You haven't got a book! Oh, then, you can bring your Bible.—You haven't got a Bible! Well, I'll lend you mine." And so on to the end.

One of "her children"—a gentleman of between 20 and 30 years, and the son of a nobleman,—while on a visit to Australia, came over to New Zealand purposely to see his old governess, of whose mental breakdown

he had been apprised ; and the fact that on her account he went so far out of his way is proof of the impression she made upon him in his early days, and of the esteem with which she was remembered. He remained in Dunedin about a fortnight, and during that time visited her almost daily. She recognised him, and in a quiet, fussless way manifested her deep affection. During the first week she received his visits with evident pleasure, but as they extended into the second week she showed signs of irritability. After his second last visit she amused the matron—a lady well advanced in life—by telling her with warmth that the young man was “coming after her,” and by earnestly advising her to “accept him.” His final interview with her on the following day was still more disappointing to him. His appearance made her usually dreamy eyes flash, and, counselling the matron to “have nothing to do with him,” she instantly fled from the room. Yet immediately afterwards and to the end he was, as the boy in her remembrance, among “her children” for whom she so ardently searched.

I have said that amid all her eccentricities she lived in a heavenly atmosphere, and manifested remarkable goodness and gentleness of disposition and child-like piety. Some time ago an asylum functionary of high standing and large experience in the Home Country publicly said he had observed that in certain cases allusions of a religious nature, more than anything else, had the effect of arresting the attention of the mentally affected, and of quieting restless ones for the time being. My experience in that regard tallies with his. Many

instances of the kind come to my recollection, and Miss Lamont is a good example. I noticed I could never successfully gain her attention unless I spoke to her about God or the Saviour. The following is illustrative of this :—A short time before her death I entered her room accompanied by the matron. It was a cosy room, with its cheery fire in the shining grate, and was made neat and homely by such adornments as suited her refined tastes. As we entered she looked round for a moment, and then unconcernedly turned her face again towards the fire. As usual, she was busily conversing with persons of the past, seen only by herself ; and at intervals her tone altered and her head inclined from side to side as she personated the individuals. I spoke to her several times and inquired about her health ; but she paid no attention, and went on with her conversation. I tried other subjects, but to no purpose. Putting my hand upon her arm, I then said, “Who is your best friend, Miss Lamont?” “I don’t know,” she replied with a snap, at the same time throwing my hand off. “Is not Jesus your best friend?” I asked. “Oh,” she responded, veering round, and with her tone quite altered and face animated, “if you came to speak to me about Jesus I’ll listen to you.” And then, with her hands joined on her lap, she paid all attention while I spoke to her and prayed with her. When I ceased speaking she pressed my hand and said with a faint smile, “That’s nice ; very nice. Thank you ; thank you.” Next moment she was away back to times gone by, and took no further notice of the matron or myself.

Although her two years in the Asylum were years of absolute idleness so far as actual work was concerned, they were very busy years for her. The restlessness of her poor brain told upon her physically, and her health gradually declined. She was nursed by the Asylum authorities as if she were a beloved mother, and everything possible was done that could minister to her comfort. At length she peacefully fell asleep, and her emancipated spirit passed away to the "rest that remaineth." But to her closing hours she lived in the past with her friends of that past, and in the present seeking for "her children."



GOOD KING DAVID.

“The King is dead!” But it cannot be added, “Long live the King!” because there is no successor to the deceased monarch. “The King” was a good old soul, and I am glad that in the providence of God he is where there is freedom from suffering, and where all is gloriously real, and not the dreamings of a distorted mind. In February, 1897, he slept away after a residence in the Asylum for the Insane of more than a quarter of a century.

“The King” was a Scotsman, as his northern brogue proclaimed him. Though in the days of his sanity he never rose above the humble rank of a jobbing carpenter, and during his years of mental darkness never attained to a higher position than that of cowherd, in the fanciful working of his poor brain he exalted himself to and revelled in a grade transcendently beyond either, and with quiet and joyous satisfaction he conceived himself King David, legitimate ruler of the ancient Kingdom of Fife. Latterly, for about two years, he suffered from an internal ailment, and had many ups and downs in the matter of physical health, and then he succumbed. But, being an old man, he could not in the course of nature have lived much longer. He was a gentle-spirited, simple-minded, kindly fellow; and all through his

insanity he showed regard for the Saviour and the Gospel truth. Happy in his child-like faith, his end was peace. Of an amiable disposition, he was much liked by the doctors and attendants, and all others who knew him hold him in respectful remembrance.

He was familiarly known as "King Da-a-vid" (the "a" as in "after"—his own pronunciation), or still more distinctively as "the King," and not infrequently as "good King Da-a-vid." It was curious to hear him speak in the most matter-of-fact way of his Kingship, of his Kingdom, and of his wife the Queen, just as if his royal standing were a fact as well known to everybody as that of our own Sovereign lady. It was also interesting to hear him avow his intention shortly to return to Fife to rejoin "the Queen" and resume his throne, while with quiet satisfaction he daily acted as herd of the Asylum milch cows, a duty which, without any surveillance, he discharged faithfully, intelligently, and with affectionate regard to the members of his bovine charge. As in the case of other royal personages in the institution (of whom there have always been a number), he looked upon the Asylum as his palace, and upon everything in it and upon it, including the "crummies," as his property; and yet he could not see that the fact that 16,000 miles of land and ocean intervened between his throne and his palace needed to be explained. One day the chief attendant alluded to the anomaly of his dual position of king and herd, and asked him how it was that he, a sovereign, spent his time menially attending a wheen cattle, to which "his Majesty" in all seriousness replied

in Scotch fashion by asking "An' wha, Geordie, my gude man, could better attend coos than him they belang tae?" The incongruity was beyond him.

Good King David! The name brings to my remembrance incidents in course of the years and remarks made by him that evidence his fine disposition and simple-minded regard for truth. I have said that he discharged his duties as Asylum herd with affectionate regard to his dumb dependents. The wise man of Scripture says, "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." That praiseful avowment applies to David. He was merciful to the animals he had the care of, ever choosing for them the best pasturage spots and sedulously watching to keep them out of harm's way; and, curiously, he spoke to them as if they were rational beings who could understand every word he said. One day while I was confabbing with him, his attention being thereby drawn from the herd, one of them ventured upon forbidden ground. Observing this, David made for her and said, "Eh, Nell, ye donnart creatur', ye ken ye shudna be there. Backlins wi' ye, an' gang ower-bye tae the ithers, an' behave yersel'!" The "donnart creatur'" turned its dreamy eyes upon him, bobbed its head, whisked its tail, and sauntered off, its pace being quickened by David's outstretched arms and vigorous "Shoo-oo-oo!" Did it understand the Doric, as did the Highland drover's dog? A Southerner called to it in his own speech, but the collie only stood and stared at him as if in bewilderment. "Hoch, man," snapped Donald; "she dusna understand the English. It's the Gaelic she

kens !” And, speaking to the animal in his own dulcet dialect, he was promptly obeyed.

During his long illness David was very patient. He never complained. To kindly inquiries he would say, “I’m nae that ill the day, thanks tae ye !” Or, “I’m nae that weel thè day”; or, “I’m gie an’ sair the day. But I maun thole’t. I mauna yammer. God’s gude !” With reference to attentions shown him he would remark, “They’re a’ verra gude tae me, an’ I’m raal thankfu’ tae them a’.” One day at the dinner hour I looked in upon him in his little room, and just then a dainty tit-bit was brought him to tempt his appetite. He partook of it with evident relish, and said, “It’s vera gude o’ them—ve-e-r-r-a gude o’ them—tae think sae o’ the likes o’ me.” He was also fond of the children of married attendants domiciled on the estate—the “bit bairnies,” or the “bit thingies,” as he called them. For them he had always a kind word, and they readily put themselves in his way to get a pat on the head and a fatherly greeting. Doubtless numbers of them looked up to his “royal highness” with a degree of awe, and in their innocence based indefinitely grand hopes on his promises of what he would do for them when he went home to his kingdom, his throne, and his Queen. While acting as herd he was allowed to use some timber laid aside as worthless, and with it he put up for himself a small, one-roomed structure on the edge of the bush behind the upper building. It was a rough concern, but he made it as natty as possible, and gave to it a home-like appearance by adorning its one pigmy window with a curtain. In

it he stored what he deemed nicknacks, and there also he whiled away his odd spare time reading his "bit bookie"—his Bible or other volume,—and he was pleased when anyone accepted his invitation to come into his "bit hoosie." But through the extinction of that part of the forest for agricultural purposes, the "bit hoosie," like David himself, has disappeared from the stage. All these characteristics go to show the simple, lovable nature of the man.

All through the years David bore me genuine goodwill, and he was always pleased when, within the building or on the grazing ground, I halted to have a chat with him. But as the "mucklest lee-er" he ever met with, I fell in his estimation some fourteen years ago. Not that his goodwill turned to dislike. Far from it. I simply became the object of his deep pity, and, amid all his hard thoughts, to the last he manifested the kindest spirit. It came about thus: After a visit to the Hot Lakes District and the White and Pink Terraces—shortly before the destruction of the latter—I gave in the Asylum Hall a pictorially-illustrated lecture in which the wonders of the district were described. The "King" was present, and the lecture—to which he gave rapt attention—greatly exercised him, though not as I expected. His frank verdict was far from flattering. At its close he emphatically protested that he "had never in a' his life listened tae sic a pack a' whappin' lees!" His great concern was that "o' a' men the Chaiplin should tell sic thumpers!" He believed that for once I had "drawn the long bow," and played a prank on him and

his fellow-inmates. That precious lecture took firm hold of him, and to the last it vexed him. In spite of my explanations, he held to it that the wonderland of my representation could not be. He was never rude, however, but always spoke in sorrow and pious expostulation. To others he expressed himself more freely; and only a short time before his death he said to the late Rev. James Clark, of revered memory, who more than once rendered service in the institution in my absence, "The maist astonishin' thing is that the Chaiplin should tell sic lees, an' that he should stick till them—like a man! Losh keep's!—it beats a'! It's quite dumfoondeirn'!" It was too much for poor David. Like the incongruity of his dual position of king and cowherd, the marvels of Maoriland were beyond his mental capacity, and like some saner men, but more excusably than they, he would not accept as true what he did not understand.

Now that "Good King Da-a-vid's" mild and smiling face is no longer seen, and his broad Doric no more heard, I miss him; but on his own account I am thankful he is at rest. With all others who had to do with him, I cherish a by no means unpleasant remembrance of my simple-minded, amiable, honest royal friend.



APPENDIX.

Brief Historical Sketch of the Gaol, Hospital, and Mental Asylum.

The Gaol comes first in order. Considering the character of the pioneers of the Otago Settlement, and the care with which they were selected by the promoters of the colonising scheme, it is not surprising that for a number of years no punitive establishment in the proper sense was required. Settlers of that time assure us that thieving was unknown, that house doors were never locked, and that all kinds of goods were left lying outside. The immigrants who arrived during the first years were staid, industrious, working people, who had the hardihood to launch out from the crowded home of their fathers to make for themselves a freer home in the Britain of the South. They were not in affluent circumstances, but their wants were few, and their mode of life simple, and they had no thought of such luxuries and show as now prevail.

Nevertheless, within a year of the arrival of the first body of immigrants in March, 1848, Dunedin possessed its first gaol, a very diminutive wooden

structure. But to the credit of the early settlers, it was in advance of the time. For a considerable period it remained tenantless as a prison, and then, strange to say, it was turned into a Church for the worship of God. Though Otago was essentially a Free Church settlement, there were among its people members of the Church of England. To them the empty prison was generously lent, and so the place intended for durance vile was incongruously utilised as the first Anglican Chapel in Dunedin. After a six years' modest career that gaol ended its days brilliantly. Fire consumed it, and the ONE prisoner it contained was granted his liberty in reward for his efforts to save it.

The second gaol was also a paltry affair, suggestive of a travelling menagerie—a wooden structure 24ft by 16ft, and comprising a room containing open bunks, fitted up in the fashion of an immigrant ship, and two solitary or strong cells. Seeing that, the world over, stone walls and iron doors have failed to prevent the escape of men of the Jack Shepherd type, it goes without saying that these matchboard cells were inadequate to frustrate the efforts of less desperate characters bent on regaining their liberty. More than one broke out, only to be recaptured, for escape from the Province was then impossible. Two facts reveal the simple-mindedness that characterised that time. The first is the very curious fact that that gaol was actually surrounded by a six feet paling fence, with the rails placed inside! That extraordinary arrangement seemed a plain invitation to the prisoners just to walk up stairs and step

outside. But even that was not necessary, as any man of ordinary athletic power could easily have vaulted over the diminutive wall, in which case he would have dropped into the water of the Bay, which then rippled up to the foot of the fence. The large piece of ground stretching from the gaol to the large wharf, and including the southern end of Castle Street, the Railway Station, and a number of extensive buildings, has all been reclaimed from the Bay. The second fact is the still more egregiously absurd one that the gaoler and his prisoners formed a very happy family. It has all through the years since then been averred by persons who can speak from personal knowledge, that the gaoler was wont, not only to send his prisoners as messengers into town, but even to allow them to visit their friends, or to go out for a stroll, or to attend entertainments, with the warning that if they were not back by lock-up hour they would not be admitted. But it should be understood that the prison inmates then were mere petty offenders, and most of them run-away sailors.

Such was Dunedin Gaol as late as 1858. In 1860 a large stone building was added; a year later the gold-fields were discovered; then hordes of all classes poured into the Colony from near and far; and too many of them being of the criminal stamp, the number of prisoners increased amazingly. The contrast between the first and later state of things is very striking. In 1855, when the first gaol was destroyed by fire, there was only one prisoner. In 1862 the large gaol was so crowded that the commodious chapel had to be used

as a sleeping place. But the tide soon turned, and through the energy of the Police Force, formed by Mr St. John Branigan, most of these undesirable immigrants were, upon their release, driven from the Colony. That last-mentioned prison was a wretched one in many respects. The much larger and more handsome one erected on the adjoining ground, and now in use, is the fourth Dunedin Gaol. Time will not permit me to record the work accomplished through the years by the prisoners. Suffice it to say, that, apart from large undertakings at Port Chalmers, at Anderson's Bay, on the Peninsula, and in other places, the upper part of the bay was considerably narrowed and the City of Dunedin largely extended by prison labour.

The Hospital comes next in order. But though it ranks first in importance and usefulness among the philanthropic institutions, and those benefited by it in number far exceed the many who have been connected with all the other institutions put together, yet its story is soon told. Ere the Province was two years old the first Dunedin Hospital was erected on the ground now occupied by the City Council Chambers in the Octagon. But, like the Gaol, it was in advance of the time. Doubtless it was deemed prudent to make provision for possible emergencies of the nature of an epidemic, such as occurred in the case of the immigrant ship, the *Moultan*, which was ravaged by cholera. For over two years not one of its beds was occupied. And then, also like the Gaol, it was turned to a use never dreamt of. Three insane persons required to be cared for, and so

the first Hospital became the first Asylum for the insane, and for a time it served the dual purpose of a Hospital and a Lunatic Asylum—the physically sick, of course, ultimately preponderating. But not until the discovery of the goldfields in 1861, when immigrants were poured into Dunedin by shiploads, was there any large demand for hospital accommodation. Then the strain became severe, and during the next few years building after building was run up, and beds provided, totalling 210, the Immigration Barracks, then in Princes Street South, being for a time used as a temporary hospital. In 1866, when 124 beds were occupied, the inmates were removed to the first Exhibition Building in King Street, and it has been part of the Hospital ever since. The institution has been greatly extended and made more effective by the addition of operating theatre, nurses' home, and handsome wards of various kinds, not the least remarkable being the Jubilee Children's Ward in honour of our late beloved Queen's record reign.

The Asylum for the insane comes third in order. It is a remarkable fact that insanity, the worst of all the ills that flesh is heir to, first appealed to the sympathies of the people of Otago and engaged the attention of the authorities. As already stated, three insane persons were the first inmates of the Hospital. Ere long the number increased to between twenty and thirty, a few of whom were from necessity domiciled in the Gaol. To ensure proper treatment a temporary Asylum was erected on the ground now occupied by the Boys' High School, the proposed permanent site

being Look Out Point at Caversham, where the Industrial School stands. In 1879, when the number of the mentally afflicted had swelled into several hundreds, the erection of the large fine Asylum at Seacliff, to accommodate 500, was begun. Its erection extended over three years, and then the removal of the large army of poor incapables was safely accomplished. As the patients now number nearly 600, a good many are comfortably housed in what are called the upper buildings, which were put together years ago to provide for the pioneer working parties from among the male inmates, by whom the ground was cleared.

While these three institutions constitute the very wide sphere embraced by the Society, they are, nevertheless, separate and very distinct spheres of labour. Let us glance at them again severally.

Take the Hospital first. It is the principal field, and in the nature of things the pleasantest, and most hopeful and satisfactory. As a rule its inmates are in a more or less ripe condition to welcome sympathetic visitation and instructive converse. I say as a rule. It would be surprising if among the many hundreds who pass through the Hospital every year there were no disagreeable persons, but unless, in their irreligious offensiveness, they go outrageously beyond bounds they must be borne with. As to this the teaching of Scripture is explicit: "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves, if God per-

adventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him at his will." Years ago a Hospital inmate of middle life was more seriously ill with internal disease than he was aware of, but his heart was bitterly set against the Gospel and its teachers, and he sneeringly resented all my kindly approaches to him. In the last instance, when I was alone with him, he was so insulting as to bring the colour to my face and an angry retort to my lip. Believing his ailment would prove mortal I checked myself and resolved to bear the snub and bide my time. It was well. He WAS brought face to face with death and eternity, and THEN he looked for me, welcomed me, and opened his ear, and I can but hope his heart also, to the story of the love of God in Jesus Christ. If, however, I had turned upon him in severity I would probably have raised an impassable wall between us.

My thirty years' work in connection with the Hospital has been very happy, and as I look back over those years there arise thick and fast in all the wards cases the remembrance of which gives joy, and the conviction that God has owned the work, and blessed it in the happy experience of very many, both in this life and in that which is to come. In one respect alone the Hospital is to the Christian visitor himself more beneficial by far than are the other institutions, for there he meets Christian men and women from all parts of the country, spiritual intercourse with whom is helpful

to his own stability and advancement, and goes a long way to counteract the depressing tendency of the work.

Let us now glance at the Asylum for the insane. I prefer that designation, and greatly dislike the name Lunatic Asylum. Those who have no knowledge of Asylum life, and they are the many, are quite at sea as regards those afflicted with the worst of all the ills that flesh is heir to. Their idea is that Christian work in the Asylum is to no purpose—just so much time and money thrown away. But the fact is that, apart from convalescents, of whom there are always a number, many of our unfortunate fellow beings in that institution are only in some degree, and in some instances only temporarily, deranged, or are so far under the power of some one delusion as to be unfitted for liberty. That being so, it follows they are capable at least to some extent of thinking intelligently, and of receiving knowledge and impressions. A large proportion of the inmates do good, solid work, many of them without any surveillance beyond that of the general superintendency. Duties are assigned them for which they are adapted, and they readily fall into their grooves and do their work with wonderful accuracy and effectiveness—in the fields, in the gardens, in the bush—in connection with the cattle, and the piggery, and the fowl yards, all large concerns; as tailors, bootmakers, carpenters, painters, etc.; as messengers between the different parts of the institution, and between it and the railway station; in the kitchen and in the laundry; in

providing supplies of fuel to all the wards and rooms ; in keeping all the buildings throughout clean and tidy, etc. Yet, if they were out in the world on their own account they would not only be aimless and useless, but in some instances dangerous to themselves and others. The Asylum is made as much a home as it can be, in it all their needs are met—food, clothing, bedding, etc.,—and everything possible is done for their welfare and comfort, and to save them from mental strain. If, however, they had to fight their way outside among their fellows, had to think and plan and endure the pressure and anxieties that bear upon those engaged in the battle of life, then would they go to the wall as incapables, as indeed they have already done so.

Now, many of these men and women have their religious sympathies, from which they derive much of their happiness, and they can and do converse upon religious and other topics. An Asylum authority of long experience in the Home Country lately affirmed that the Gospel truth more readily than anything else attracted the attention of the insane, and for the time sobered them—that is, such of them as could at all be sobered. In that respect my observation is in keeping with his. The inmates of the Asylum are not far short of 600. Of these about 150 attend Divine service, and however restless they may be in the wards, in the chapel they comport themselves with amazing decorum—turn to chapter and verse and hymn, take part in the psalmody, bend in prayer, and give attention to the sermon. Excepting that here and there there may be

seen a little eccentric action, or facial expression, or movement of the lips, or a murmuring sound be heard, their bearing in the Asylum Church is just like that of worshippers in other churches. Of course, were all the inmates present at the service, then would there be bedlam in earnest, but that is avoided by a selection being made of the most reliable.

Among the inmates are clever men and women. For example, the large, finely-carved fountain just within the main entrance to the grounds is the work of a patient who, for a long time wished to get out of the world because he felt he was of no use in it. It was observed that he had a natural talent for carving, and so blocks of Oamaru stone were obtained for him, designs furnished to him, and the work given him to accomplish. And there it stands, and there also is George, still an inmate, and likely to be to the end, but with a sense of usefulness in his soul, and therefore with some light and joy in his life. Among the inmates are educated and cultured readers, thinkers, and writers, whose writing sometimes seems to betoken high and clear intelligence. There are also men and women of Christian knowledge and experience, to whom religious conversation and prayer is welcome and profitable. One old lady, who had blindness added to her mental infirmity, longed for the time when, as she said, she would see the King in His glory.

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